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Birth

Birth takes place in the bush, some distance from the hamlet, in the presence of female relatives of the woman and of her husband. If the child is stillborn, or miscarried, it is buried in the bush. The husband and wife must abstain from sexual intercourse for some months, until a special ritual intercourse is performed. A man who breaks this taboo is liable to contract a fatal disease, *kwanga*. Difficult births are attributed to: (a) a curse spoken by a matrilineal relative—this is made effective by the intervention of the ancestors, and to remove it it is necessary to perform a rite making clear that no malice is borne; (b) the adultery of the woman or her husband, in which case confession will save the woman from dying; and (c) sorcery.

If a child is born alive it is brought to the hut of the mother or one of her female relatives, where it is secluded until its naming ceremony, about six days later. Only after the naming is the child considered to be a member of society. A second child should not be born while the first is still suckling, i.e. for about two years. When the child is about four or five months old it is ritually immunized against the dangers of sexual activity, and the parents may resume relations. Elaborate magical precautions are taken to ensure the child's survival. Children sleep with their mother, the boys until they are old enough to go to the boys' dormitory, and the girls until marriage.[1]

Initiation

The yearly initiation ceremonies, *unyago*, are the principal cultural institution of the Yao. That for the boys, *lupanda*, is the most important, and may only take place under a chief or superior village headman, whereas a girls' initiation ceremony may take place under an ordinary headman. The right to hold a boys' initiation ceremony therefore becomes a mark of status which is jealously disputed.[2] The right is expressed as 'having a *citeko*'. A *citeko* is the small basket in which the special sacrificial flour is carried.

Yao carry out initiation between the ages of seven and eleven, whereas generally in East Africa it is postponed until puberty.[3] In response to requests from the headmen the chief appoints the time and place of the boys' initiation ceremony for a group of villages. It is held at the end of the dry season, before the bush is burned. Each initiate is accompanied by a sponsor, *nkamani*, who may be a brother, uncle, or friend. Before they set out for the place appointed to be *lupanda*, they all assemble before the chief to be anointed with millet-flour specially prepared by his head wife. The word *lupanda* refers to a forked stick over which the sacrificial flour is poured. This stick is planted at the place of assembly, the *masakasa*. The boys, their sponsors, and the master of ceremonies, *m'mbiwa*, are accompanied with dancing as far as *masakasa* by their friends. The next day the initiates go to a spot in the bush, where the circumcision (formerly only an incision) is performed, and remain in the bush school, *ndagala*, for about two months, until the wounds are completely healed. The Yao circumcision rite is said not to have been introduced by the Arabs.[4]

During these weeks the boys are subjected to rigorous discipline and instructed in various skills and tribal lore. They sleep in long dormitory huts, with partitions dividing the boys of different villages from each other. The chief appoints the day for

[1] Warner, 1906, pp. 105-8.
[2] Stannus and Davey, 1913, p. 119.
[3] Duff, 1905, p. 311.
[4] Livingstone, 1874, p. 81.

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT? Yao FT?

return to the *lupanda*, where the initiates are welcomed by their friends. An essential part of the ceremony which takes place at this stage is the exhibition of animal shapes made by the *n'mitiwa*, with mounds of earth outlined in flour. These animal shapes differ from lodge to lodge. On the last night before the return to the village the initiates undergo a ceremonial bathing, each boy being carried to the stream by a woman, who thereafter is addressed as 'elder sister'. Finally, with new names, and freshly oiled and decorated, they march to the chief's village to be redeemed by him from the *n'mitiwa* with gifts of cloth. After initiation it is a deadly insult to call a boy by his child-name. All who pass through initiation together consider themselves bound by mutual obligations of hospitality.[1]

Girls' initiation takes place in three stages. First, there is *cipoto*, the general initiation before puberty, which corresponds to the boys' *lupanda*. It takes place at the same time of year, and though it lasts for less than a week, its conclusion is celebrated at *lupanda* jointly with the conclusion of the boys' initiation. A hut is built in the bush, like the long dormitory of the boys, and four days are spent in dancing and singing. Each girl (aged about eight years) is accompanied by a sponsor, a woman friend who continues to be her mentor during subsequent rites, and who assists in giving the girl instruction in her womanly duties. At the end the girls are bathed and anointed, dressed in new clothes, and each is carried to *lupanda* by her sponsor. Here they prove their skill in dancing and receive gifts from their friends. Ritual defloration follows the *cipoto* initiation.[2] Among Mohammedans, clitoridectomy used to be performed by a woman operator, but, it is said, was discontinued in about 1903 on account of the heavy mortality.[3]

After this first general celebration, first pregnancy and first birth are the occasions of separate rites for each girl. According to some informants there were once two ceremonies connected with pregnancy. One, for the young married men whose wives had not yet conceived, used to take place at the same time as *cipoto*; each man was attended by a woman sponsor not his wife, given good advice, and put through various tests of manhood. Mitchell does not confirm the present existence of this ceremony, but in the old days if a man was betrothed or married to a child going through her *cipoto* he had to accompany her.

The *litimo* ceremony takes place when a young married woman quickens with child for the first time.[4] The woman, with her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, went out in procession for a ceremony of singing and dancing and instruction to the young couple, followed by a feast. Nowadays no men are allowed to attend *litimo*. A child born of a woman who had not undergone this rite used to be buried alive; nowadays her *anyaw mbumba* is charged by the chief.

Finally, six days after the first child is born, its naming ceremony forms a last initiation rite for its mother. The husband is formally led into her hut by her sponsor and the married women of the neighbourhood, and the child is taken out for the first time to the accompaniment of feasting and dancing.

Most Yao men and women act as sponsors of initiates at least once, and all parti-

[1] Sources for boys' initiation: Stannus and Davey, 1913; Werner, 1906, pp. 124-6; Stannus, A. 1922, pp. 147-63; Henkel, 1935, pp. 19 29.; Johnston, 1897, p. 409; Weule, I., 1909, p. 329.
[2] Stannus, A. 1922, p. 134. [3] Ibid., I. 1910, p. 196.
[4] Ibid., A. 1922, p. 274; Henkel, 1935, p. 23, calls it *citumbo* (belly).

1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT? Tan F?

ejaute yearly in the great initiation festival for boys and girls. Consequently as they appear each year the lessons of their own initiation, the ceremonies are the main vehicle of Yao culture.[1]

There are also two Moslem ceremonies:

(i) *Jando*, the boys' Moslem baptism, which takes about seven days, and is usually worked in with *lupanda*;

(ii) *Nkanda*, the girls' Moslem baptism, which is the same as *jando*, but usually quite separate from *ejaute*. It is important that the wife of a Moslem should have her *nkanda* so that she knows how to prepare the food properly at Ramadan.

Menstruation and Other Taboos

Menstruation is held to be dangerous. A special mat is used by the woman during this time, and is rolled up and kept during the rest of the cycle. The hut is completely replastered after menstruation. Intercourse during menses leads to disease of the man. Sexual contact is dangerous to persons at certain other periods: during initiation ceremonies, during mourning, and for babies who have not been through the protective rite. The danger is thought to lie in *mdoka*, a dread disease characterized by swelling. This may be transmitted by salt in the food. Deaths are often attributed to 'salt'. Much of the significance of the mourning is that medicines are prepared which protect the mourners against the dangers attendant on sexual activity.

Burial Rites

News of a death must be sent to the chief by a messenger carrying a single fowl. The chief gives a present of calico for wrapping the body, and a goat for the burial men. These are called *anaki*, neighbours unrelated to the dead, who volunteer for certain duties. They prepare the body for burial and carry it in procession to the graveyard outside the village. No uninitiated person is allowed to see the funeral. All who attend the burial are prohibited from sexual intercourse for one month. After this time the prohibition is lifted by a ceremony of beer drinking and feasting, and on the following day all fires in the village are extinguished, and then relit, and the mourners are shaved. A year later beer is brewed for a final ceremony.

For a period after her husband's death a widow is unclean, and has to be purified by ritual intercourse with a man who is paid. The widow is not allowed to remarry for two or three years. A widower leaves his wife's village, after receiving a parting gift. The widows of ordinary persons are not inherited. If a man has himself a 'name' (rank and social position), he has an heir, who inherits also the wives of his predecessor. But if the heir (the maternal nephew) has married a cross-cousin (mother's brother's daughter) he would not consider the wife's mother as his inherited wife.

Before the burial the dead man's hut used to be destroyed, together with his possessions. Immediately afterwards a consultation is held as to whether retaliatory action against sorcerers is called for. The *anaki*'s duties include not only the conducting of the burial, but also the subsequent inquiry and the conduct of the second ceremony, the beer drinking, at which they shave the mourners. A man who has

[1] Main sources for girls' initiation: Heckel, 1933, p. 19; Swanson, 1, 1910, pp. 189-7; 2, 1910, pp. 269-74; Swanson and Dewey, 1913; Duff, 1905, pp. 310-13; Abdullah, 1919, pp. 16-17; Macdonald, 1882, vol. 1, pp. 125-30; Werner, 1906, pp. 106-7; Johnston, 1897, p. 410.

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The chief identifies a man who comes to see him in exactly the same way, and the Administration has adopted a similar system, except that it has its own definition of the village. During the initiation ceremonies, the initiands[1] are housed in long grass sheds which are subdivided into sections. Each section or room of the long shed houses the boys or girls from one village. If villages share a burial ground, they have allotted portions where they bury their dead separately. In these and many other ways the village is looked upon by the Yao as a distinct unit in the chiefdom.

The chiefdom in the old days was distinctly a territorial unit and all the villages within that area recognized the superiority of the chief. The boundaries of the old chiefdoms were marked by rivers and hills and fixed after conquest and agreement. They are still well remembered. Modern chiefdoms are defined in their limits partly by Government decree and partly by custom. When Principal Headmen were appointed, the districts under them were demarcated with 'due regard being given to the composition of the Native population'. The traditional areas under the various chiefs, therefore, were recognized by the Administration as districts, so that the districts or their sections almost coincided with the chiefdoms. Some disputes between chiefs over boundaries have occurred from time to time and the Administration has had to arbitrate. For example, the Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province reported a difference between Liwonde and Kawinga in 1936,[2] but through time these differences have been eliminated.

Traditional and Administrative boundaries do not coincide in a few places, for two reasons. Firstly, the Administration has accepted an obvious and physical boundary in preference to an indistinct and social boundary. It has taken the Domasi River as the boundary between Ntumanje and Mposa, though in fact a few villages under Mbela, Kawinga III's son, live on the south side of the river, and fall for Administrative purposes in Ntumanje's area. Mbela is still very strongly associated with Kawinga in ritual and kinship matters. His dealings with the

[1] I am grateful to Prof. Schapera for suggesting this word for those who are undergoing initiation ceremonies. The parallel is with graduands, *i.e.* those who are undergoing graduation ceremonies.

[2] *Report of the Provincial Commissioner, Southern Province* (1936), 20.

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622 559 293 robes (a gown not unlike a woman's dressing-gown), wears a bright-coloured turban, and has one or two men walking behind him, he is a rather important village headman. One particular item of clothing in the Kawinga, Liwonde and Nyambi areas, is the scarlet headband which some village headmen may wear. I shall discuss this later in the context of the competition of village headmen for rank.

622 559 411 Another external characteristic of rank, which seems to have disappeared with the changing economic structure of Nyasaland, was the carrying of knives (*usinje*) by important village headmen. Previously, status was indicated by the type and size of knife carried in public. The chief usually carried the largest and most ornate. The knife taken from Kawinga on his surrender in Portuguese East Africa was about 18 inches long and had a decorated ivory handle. Smaller knives of similar pattern belonged to his headmen.[1] Nowadays, many young commoners carry knives two or even three feet long, made from the broken blades of motor-car springs.

622 554 351 [582] The right of important village headmen to build fences[2] at the back of their huts is also a mark of prestige which seems to have lost its significance. About 50 years ago only important headmen had the right to erect a fence at the back of their huts. This fence, made of tall grass about six feet high, enclosed the grain stores and other food supplies of the household and formed a private compound in which the headman's wife and slaves carried on their daily tasks.[3] It seems likely that private compounds and slavery were positively associated, so that only the important village headmen who had many slaves found it necessary to build fences. All chiefs and most important headmen to-day still erect these fences. Those who hold initiation [88] rights are obliged to build them because, when the initiands return from the seclusion phase of the initiation ceremony, they are supposed to spend one night in the headman's private compound before going back to their villages. But nowadays, minor village headmen and commoners also frequently build these

[1] See f.n. 4, Chap. II, p. 38.

[2] *Lutenje*, pl. *ndenje*. The enclosed space or 'compound' is *cimbundi*. Typical hut compounds are depicted on Plate IX (*a*) and (*b*), facing p. 206.

[3] MacDonald suggests that the common term *kuyeto* for woman is derived from the adverb *kuyeto*—on the other side (of the fence).

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622 554 648 annuity. This recognition publicly announced their superior status, because not all headmen could be Administrative headmen. We do not know exactly how the Administrative headmen were appointed when the Ordinance was introduced. The observable results, however, are that no headman, as far as I am aware, who was of superior status in the indigenous ranking system, is not an Administrative headman to-day. Being an Administrative headman is then in itself an indicator of rank.

622 554 643 415 769 881 Rather more important than this is the right to hold initiation ceremonies. MacDonald says that these rights were held by the chief only, but it is not clear whether the word 'chief' used here refers to the village headmen or the 'chief of the land'. Nowadays, the rights are held by village headmen as well as the chief. The right to hold initiation ceremonies is signified by the possession of a small flat basket (*ciselo*) in which the oblational flour for the ceremonies is carried. When a chief grants a *ciselo* or oblational basket to a village headman, what in fact he does is to grant him permission to approach the spirits of his ancestors. The headman uses the basket on three occasions during the initiation ceremonies. First, before the ceremony is announced he pours a little cone of sorghum meal at the root of a special tree in or near the village. This tree is known as the *nsolo*, or the shrine-tree where all offerings to the ancestors are made. While he works the flour through his fingers to allow it to fall in a cone, he calls on his ancestral spirits and asks them to intercede on his behalf with the spirits of the chief's ancestors. He then formally requests permission to hold the initiation ceremony. This cone is left intact through the night. Should it collapse the interpretation is that the spirits are not willing that the ceremony should take place and it is postponed for some days. Offerings are made until eventually the cone, by remaining intact through the night, indicates that all is propitious for the ceremony to be conducted. The second occasion when the oblational basket is used is when the village headman or chief goes down to the grass sheds where the rites of segregation and aggregation take place. Here he pours flour over a twig and begs the safe conduct of the initiands through this physically and mystically dangerous period. Third, each individual initiand, and his or her mother, is touched on the forehead and forearm with the flour on the evening that the initiands leave for the grass sheds. During

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the last rite the owner of the oblational basket exacts a payment of threepence or so from each parent. The headman does gain financially from the initiation ceremony, but it would be wrong to imagine that this is the only reason why he should want to have the right to hold it. The competition for the rights, which are limited to a few, is part of the general political process whereby village headmen compete for privileges and advantages over their fellows.

Village headmen may hold either the boys' or the girls' initiation ceremonies, or both. Sometimes, when they hold both, they delegate the girls' ceremony to a younger brother or some other relative without referring to the chief. For example, Kawinga's clan relative and important retainer, Ngalawanga, had the rights to both initiation ceremonies, and he allowed his perpetual 'son' Isa [1] to hold the girls'. Also in Nyambi area, Majaja, who had both initiation rights, allowed his perpetual 'son' Nantunga to have the girls' ceremony. It is generally conceded that the right to hold the boys' initiation ceremonies is more valuable than the right to hold the girls'. H. L. Duff, writing in 1906, had also noticed this when he wrote:

> The respective ceremonies seem to be considered as on a somewhat different footing, for the boys' *inyago* can properly be held only at the village and under the patronage of, so to say, the paramount chief of the neighbourhood, whereas the girls' initiation may take place under the auspices of an inferior headman. This distinction is still jealously observed and any breach of the chief's privileges is apt to lead to bitter dispute.[2]

The sanction the chief holds over the headmen in this respect is mystical. A village headman believes that the initiation will be a success (that is, that the initiands will be free from the harm of wild beasts and illness, or the circumcision wounds of the boys will heal quickly and well), only if the approval of the chief's ancestors is obtained. He cannot hold the initiation ceremonies, unless he has obtained the basket from the chief.

Most people still follow tribal initiation customs, but in the extremes of the area in which I worked, religious ideas are bringing about a change. In the north in Jalasi's area where Islam

[1] The first Isa was the son of Ngalawanga and this relationship is preserved by the modern incumbents of the headmanships. See Chap. V, p. 122.

[2] Duff, H. L., *Nyasaland under the Foreign Office* (London, 1906), 312.

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is most powerful, there is a tendency for the Islamic initiation ceremony for boys, *jandu*, and the Islamic initiation ceremony for girls, *nsondo*, to displace the tribal equivalents, *lupanda* and *ciputu*. These Moslem initiations are conducted by Moslem teachers (*mwalimu*) and are not controlled by the chief. Though it also involves the circumcision of the boys, *jandu* is very much shorter and the boys are secluded for only a week. Some say it is becoming more popular because it is less expensive for the boys' parents. In Chiwalo's area the two ceremonies are run concurrently. The boys and girls go through the normal segregation rites at the beginning of the ceremony, but an *mwalimu* circumcises the boys according to Islamic practice. At the aggregation rites at the end of the period of seclusion, the star and crescent appears as one of the symbols along with the whale (*namungumi*), antelope (*mbalapi*), leopard (*cisuwi*), and the other tribal effigies which are shown to the boys. Christianity in the south has had a similar effect. The Missions actively discouraged initiation ceremonies in the past. Many of the people in Mposa's and Malemia's area have dropped the custom, or have integrated prayers and other parts of Christian ritual into the ceremonies, though circumcision is steadfastly retained. The effect of these changes is that the important ritual control the chief had over the ceremony has been undermined, and so the prestige attached to it has also begun to fade in these areas. What I describe about the prestige of village headmen and the rights they have to initiation ceremonies is only partially true, and is falling away daily. The correlation I seek to establish is also disturbed by the fact that among the Nguru there is a slightly different initiation ceremony (*cidodoto*) for boys. Most Nguru send their boys to the Yao initiations but there are still some who hold their own traditional ceremonies. These are not within the mystical control of the chief so that some Nguru headmen are outside the competition for the initiation rights. I should say, however, that most compete with the Yao for Yao initiation rights so that this factor is not as disturbing as appears at first sight. In addition, village headmen who move into a new area usually must obtain the permission of the chief before they may use the initiation rights they held before coming into the area.

There are other indicators of the general high rank of village headmen. Junior headmen, like commoners, must give a special

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European-type clothing. In Nyambi area, abutting on Kawinga-Liwonde area in the north, there are 12 Administrative village headmen out of 57 who are entitled to the scarlet headband (21 per cent). For the Kawinga-Liwonde area the percentage is 5·7. An informant explained why a large proportion of headmen in Nyambi area had the right to wear the headband: 'The old Nyambis and the present one do not care. If a man has many huts, and if he says that his uncle had a scarlet headband, then he is given one too.' Even within the Kawinga-Liwonde area there is some variation in the number of headmen who are entitled to the scarlet headband. The following table sets this out.

Chiefdom	Total Admin. Headmen	% Scarlet Headbands
Kawinga	160	3·7
Liwonde	104	4·8
Mposa	30	10·0
Chikweo	48	8·4
Ngokwe	21	14·2
Chamba	61	4·9

Mposa area near Lake Chirwa shows such a high proportion because of the Nyanja ex-chiefs who are entitled to the scarlet headband. Chikweo and Ngokwe on the other hand are the Mpotola chiefs and seem to have taken the same attitude as Nyambi and his predecessors. In contrast to the statement about Nyambi, one Administrative headman in Mposa's area said: 'The chief's scarlet band is good enough for us all. If each had one it would be too gaudy!'

The Struggle for Initiation Rights

Village headmen are generally outside competition for the right to wear the scarlet headband. These rights have been established largely by ancient custom and are almost confined to the Invaders or to those who have had them before they came into the area. The competition for initiation rights, however, goes on steadily. H. L. Duff had noticed this as early as 1906.[1] Newcomers may approach the chief and agitate for the rights,

[1] See p. 81.

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622 554 881 pressing their claims on many grounds. They may stress that they have a large village under them and that they have many children to initiate, and argue that their villages are far away from the nearest headman who has these rights. Or they may use their rank and connection with the chief. If all else fails they may threaten to move to another chiefdom. Punyu threatened to do this.

622 554 881 578 In 1947, Punyu, an Administrative village headman in Chiwalo area, had 43 tax-payers under him and thought that he should have initiation rights. He had come to Chiwalo's in 1933 after the village had split in Chikowi's area near Zomba. He had relatives in Kapaloma's village in Chiwalo's area. He argued with Chiwalo that his uncle had had initiation rights. Chiwalo on the other hand, argued that Punyu village was so close to his own—a matter of under a mile—that he could not consider it. This argument went on for some months. Eventually Punyu told the chief that he was going to leave his area. Chiwalo then recanted to some extent and offered Punyu the permission to use the *ciputu* basket, that is, the right to conduct girls' initiation ceremonies. Punyu, after consulting his sister, took this and was satisfied.

But the chief is not always cowed by the threat to leave his area. He is sometimes able to draw on his official position to control his headmen. The argument between Makata and Ntimbuka illustrates this very well.

Makata was an Administrative headman of some standing in Chiwalo's area. He had been one of the invading headmen and was entitled to wear the scarlet headband. In 1947, he had 101 tax-payers under him and had been given the right to hold boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies at least 30 years ago. Ntimbuka on the other hand was a comparative newcomer. He came from Kawinga's area in about 1930. He is of Nyanja stock but has adopted the Yao language and customs. His village in 1947 had 23 tax-payers and was about 300 yards from Makata's. Early in 1947, Ntimbuka started quarrelling with Makata about the right to boys' initiation ceremonies. He felt that he ought to have rights as well as Makata. Eventually he told Makata that he would refuse to take the boys to his initiation ceremonies. Seething with discontent Ntimbuka went to complain about Makata to Chiwalo, and told him that he had had an argument with Makata and that he was going to leave the area because of it. Chiwalo called Makata and asked him what the trouble was. Makata told Chiwalo that Ntimbuka was jealous of the basket. Chiwalo

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then told Ntimbuka that he could not give a sacrifice basket to him because his village was so close to Makata's. Ntimbuka was not satisfied with this and continued agitating. Chiwalo, at last exasperated, threatened Ntimbuka that if he had any more trouble he would send him to Kawinga to be dealt with. Kawinga of course is the Native Authority in the area and holds the power of arresting headmen under Section 12 of the Ordinance. Ntimbuka was duly cowed by this threat and meekly agreed to send his boys to Makata's initiation ceremonies.

Chiwalo had to support Makata against Ntimbuka. Makata was a powerful headman: he had rank from his descent and a large village under him. Ntimbuka was a Newcomer and he had only a fifth of the followers that Makata had. If it meant losing followers it was better to lose the smaller village. As it was Chiwalo could use the power of the White Administration to keep Ntimbuka within his area and yet keep him subservient.

A Newcomer is unlikely to be given both boys' and girls' initiation rights. He is more likely to be able to get only one of the rights. Table XVI sets out the number of headmen in

TABLE XVI

NUMBERS OF HEADMEN HOLDING BOYS' AND GIRLS' INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG ABORIGINAL, INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN

Type of Initiation Right	Aborigines	Invaders	Newcomers	Total
Both boys' and girls' init. rights . . .	—	17	14	31
Boys' init. rights only .	1	6	10	17
Girls' init. rights only .	1	12	31	44
No init. rights . . .	16	84	198	298
Total	18	119	253	390*
% Init. holders . .	11·5	29·4	21·7	24·5

Combining Aboriginal and Invader totals.

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 6{\cdot}48$; $p = 0{\cdot}09254$.

* Total excludes the 24 headmen who have the right to wear the scarlet headband.

each category who hold initiation ceremonies. While more Invaders have the right to both ceremonies the proportion holding

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only one is roughly the same.[1] A Newcomer may approach the chief and ask for initiation rights in certain circumstances only. In general, these are that his village is a very large one, that he had the rights in the area from which he has just come, and/or that he is living in so isolated a part that it would be a hardship for his children to go to the nearest other headman who holds the rights; but he may press his claim if he is related to the chief and can approach him as a kinsman.

There is little doubt that the rights are closely associated with the size of the villages:

TABLE XVIIa

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO HAVE VILLAGES WITH MORE AND LESS THAN 60 TAX-PAYERS

(The figures in brackets are percentages)

Type of Init. Right	Over 60		Under 60		Total
	Invader	Newcomer	Invader	Newcomer	
Both init. rights . .	10 (32·3)	9 (29·0)	7 (22·6)	5 (16·1)	31 (100·0)
Boys' init. rights only .	2 (12·4)	5 (31·3)	4 (25·0)	5 (31·3)	16 (100·0)
Girls' init. rights only .	2 (4·8)	13 (31·0)	10 (23·8)	17 (40·4)	42 (100·0)*
No init. rights	9 (23·2)	26 (9·3)	75 (26·8)	170 (60·7)	280 (100·0)†
Total . .	23 (6·2)	53 (14·4)	96 (26·0)	197 (53·4)	369 (100·0)

$n = 3$ ‡; $\chi^2 = 53{\cdot}49$; $p < 0{\cdot}0001$.

* Excludes 1 village whose size was unknown.
† Excludes 2 villages whose sizes were unknown.
‡ Combining Invader and Newcomer groups.

[1] Invaders with both initiation rights (17 of 119) = 14·3 per cent; Newcomers with both initiation rights (14 of 253) = 5·5 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 8·8; S.E. of diff. = 3·07; C.R. = 2·85; $p = 0{\cdot}0044$.

Invaders with rights to only one of the initiations (18 of 119) = 15·1 per cent; Newcomers with rights to only one of the initiations (41 of 253) = 16·2 per cent.

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TABLE XVII*b*

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO HAVE VILLAGES WITH MORE AND LESS THAN 60 TAX-PAYERS
(Arranged to hold the influence of village size fixed)

Type of Headman	Over 60		Under 60		Total
	Init.	No Init.	Init.	No Init.	
Invaders . .	14 (11·8)	9 (7·6)	21 (17·6)	75 (63·0)	119 (100·0)
Newcomers .	27 (10·8)	26 (10·4)	27 (10·8)	170 (68·0)	250 (100·0)
Total . .	41 (11·1)	35 (9·5)	48 (13·0)	245 (66·4)	369 (100·0)

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 3{\cdot}96$; $p = 0{\cdot}26667$.

Among all headmen (Table XVII*a*):

19 of 31 headmen who hold both initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . . = 61·3%
7 of 16 headmen who hold only the boys' initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . . = 43·7%
15 of 42 headmen who hold only the girls' initiation rights have villages of more than 60 tax-payers . . . . . = 35·7%
35 of 280 headmen who hold no initiation rights have villages with more than 60 tax-payers . . . . . = 12·5%

When the influence of village-size is held constant the advantages of Invaders over Newcomers in the competition for initiation rights is discernible, but the differences are so small that they are of doubtful significance (Table XVII*b*).

14 of 23 Invader headmen with villages over 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . . = 60·9%
27 of 53 non-Invader headmen with villages over 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . . = 50·9%
21 of 96 Invader headmen with villages less than 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . . = 21·9%
27 of 197 non-Invader headmen with villages less than 60 tax-payers have initiation rights . . . . . = 13·7%

As we may anticipate, relationship with the chief is an important factor in the competition for initiation rights. Among the chief's direct and clan relatives for example, 36·4 per cent (51 of 140) hold initiation rights, but only 16·8 per cent (39 of

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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TABLE XVIII

INITIATION RIGHTS AMONGST INVADER AND NEWCOMER HEADMEN WHO ARE RELATED AND UNRELATED TO THE CHIEF

Type of Initiation Holder	Invader				Newcomer				Total
	D	C	N	T	D	C	N	T	
Both init. rights .	5	8	4	17	2	3	9	14	31
Boys' init. rights only	2	2	2	6	1	1	8	10	16
Girls' init. rights only	5	5	2	12	5	12	14	31	43
No init. rights . .	26	25	33	84	13	25	160	198	282
Total	38	40	41	119	21	41	191	253	372
% Init. holders .	31·6	40·0	24·2	29·4	38·1	39·0	19·4	21·7	24·2

D = Direct relatives; C = Clan relatives; N = Non-relatives; T = Sub-totals.

Combining Invader and Newcomer totals.

$n = 6$; $\chi^2 = 22{\cdot}24$; $p = 0{\cdot}00112$.

232) of his non-relatives hold them [1] (Table XVIII). There is a slightly greater proportion of the clan relatives holding initiation rights than direct kinsmen, but the difference is insignificant.[2] Slightly more of the chief's relatives among the Newcomers hold initiation rights than those among the Invaders,[3] but once again the difference is so small that it might easily have arisen by chance. A much greater proportion of Invaders is related to the chief than of Newcomers,[4] so that among the Invaders the relative advantage of their kinship with the chief, as against the unrelated, is somewhat reduced. There are very many Invaders who can claim kinship with the chief in their struggle for initiation rights. Among the Newcomers, conversely, because there

[1] Diff. of per cent = 19·6; S.E. of diff. = 4·58; C.R. = 4·28; $p = 0{\cdot}00002$.

[2] Direct relatives (20 of 59) = 33·9 per cent; Clan relatives (31 of 81) = 38·3 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 4·3; S.E. of diff. = 8·2; C.R. = 0·52; $p = 0{\cdot}6030$.

[3] Newcomers (24 of 62) = 38·7 per cent; Invaders (27 of 78) = 34·6 per cent; Diff. of per cent = 4·1; S.E. of diff. = 8·2; C.R. = 0·5; $p = 0{\cdot}6170$.

[4] Excluding those entitled to wear the scarlet headband. Invaders (78 of 119) = 65·6 per cent; Newcomers (62 of 253) = 24·5 per cent.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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are so few of the chief's kinsmen among them, to be related to the chief is a distinct advantage in this struggle.

I recorded the origin of the initiation rights of only 38 of the 55 Newcomer headmen who hold these, excluding those who also have the right to wear the scarlet headband. Table XIX sets out these data. We cannot put too much reliance on these

TABLE XIX

THE ORIGIN OF INITIATION RIGHTS OF SOME NEWCOMER HEADMEN

Type of Initiation Right	Given by Chief of present residential chieftaincy	Brought from elsewhere	Total	% Brought in
Both init. rights . .	8	5	13	38
Boys' init. rights only .	9	0	9	0
Girls' init. rights only .	15	1	16	6
Total	32	6	38	16

figures because they cover only about three-quarters of the village headmen in this category, and these, moreover, were not randomly selected. As they stand, the figures support my earlier conclusion that Newcomers are more likely to obtain rights for only one initiation ceremony, than for both together. While 38·5 per cent (5 of 13) of the village headmen who hold both initiation ceremonies had brought in their rights with them from outside, only 4·0 per cent (1 of 25) of those who hold only one of the rights had done so.[1] An analysis of the periods when headmen were given their rights reveals consistent results.

From Table XX we see that:

Of 11 Invaders who hold rights to both initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 3 . . . . . = 27·3%

Of 8 Newcomers who hold rights to both initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 2 . . . . . = 25·0%

Of 12 Invaders who hold rights to only one of the initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 3 . . . . . = 25·0%

Of 24 Newcomers who hold rights to only one of the initiation ceremonies, recent chiefs granted 14 . . . . . = 58·3%

[1] Diff. of per cent = 34·5; S.E. of diff. = 12·47; C.R. = 2·77; $p = 0.0056$.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

TABLE XX

WHEN INITIATION RIGHTS WERE GRANTED TO NEWCOMERS AND INVADERS

Type of Initiation Right	By early Chiefs		By recent Chiefs*		Total
	Invaders	Newcomers	Invaders	Newcomers	
Both init. . .	8	6	3	2	19
One init. only .	9	10	3	14	36
Total . . .	17	16	6	16	55

* This is obviously a crude classification. I have taken roughly 35 years as the dividing line. As the early chiefs I have classified all the Kawingas before and including Kawinga V who died in 1913; all the Liwondes before and including Liwonde III who died in 1921; all the Ngokwes before and including Ngokwe IV who died in 1905; all the Mposas before and including Mposa II who died in 1913; and all the Chikweos before and including Chikweo II who died in 1914.

In other words, recent chiefs have been granting single initiation rights to Invaders in the same proportion as they have been granting both rights, but they have been granting Newcomer headmen the right to hold only one ceremony more often than the right to hold both. Of the six sets of rights to initiation ceremonies granted by recent chiefs to Invader headmen, three were rights to hold only one ceremony, while 14 of the 16 initiation rights granted to Newcomer headmen were for one ceremony only.[1]

Headmen do not make use of their bonds of common religion or tribe with the chief in their competition for initiation rights. Table XXI sets out the numbers of headmen of different religion. There is a substantially smaller proportion of Pagan headmen (9·7 per cent) holding initiation ceremonies than either Christians (25·5 per cent) or Moslems (24·4 per cent).[2] Most Pagans, however, are also Newcomers so that this difference is actually a reflex of the generally lower rank of Newcomers. Table XXII sets out the number of headmen of the chief's tribe and of other

[1] i.e. 50·0 per cent against 87·5 per cent; diff. of per cent = 37·5; S.E. of diff. = 20·08; C.R. = 1·87; p = 0·0614.

[2] Pagans = 9·7 per cent; Others 24·6 per cent; diff of per cent = 14·9; S.E. of diff. = 7·94; C.R. = 1·88; p = 0·0603.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

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TABLE XXI

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG HEADMEN OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Type of Initiation Holder	Moslem	Christian	Pagan	Total
Both init. rights . .	25	4	1	30*
Boys' init. rights only .	12	4	—	16
Girls' init. rights only .	31	6	2	39†
No init. rights . . .	211	41	28	280‡
Total	279	55	31	365

$n = 6$; $\chi^2 = 5{\cdot}05$; $p = 0{\cdot}53778$.

* Excludes 1 headman whose religion was unrecorded.
† Excludes 4 headmen whose religion was unrecorded.
‡ Excludes 2 headmen whose religion was unrecorded.

TABLE XXII

THE DISTRIBUTION OF INITIATION RIGHTS AMONG HEADMEN OF THE SAME AND DIFFERENT TRIBE AS THE CHIEF

Type of Initiation Holder	Same Tribe	Different Tribe	Total
Both init. holders	20	11	31
Boys' init. holders only . . .	7	9	16
Girls' init. holders only . . .	23	20	43
No init. rights	156	126	282
Total	206	166	372
% Init. holders	24·3	24·1	24·2

$n = 3$; $\chi^2 = 2{\cdot}17$; $p = 0{\cdot}54167$.

tribes who hold initiation rights. Once again the proportion of headmen of the same tribe as the chief who hold initiation rights is the same as that of headmen of different tribes from the chief. We may say, therefore, that membership of tribe is not an operative factor in the granting of initiation rights.[1]

[1] The factors contributing to the granting of initiation rights are obviously all interrelated.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

622 554 881 292 The right to hold initiation ceremonies may be held concurrently with the right to wear a scarlet headband. For purposes of analysis thus far, I have treated the holding of initiation ceremonies separately. By common consensus, the wearing of this headband is an indicator of much greater rank than the holding of initiation ceremonies. The highest ranking headmen, like the chiefs, usually have the right to wear the scarlet headband together with the rights to both initiation ceremonies. In order to show how rank varies among the main categories of village headmen I have devised a numerical

TABLE XXIII

MARKS OF RANK AMONG ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN

Type of Headman	With Headband				Without Headband				Total
	Both	Boys only	Girls only	No rights	Both	Boys only	Girls only	No rights	
Aborigines:									
Direct rel.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Clan rel.	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2
No rel. .	2	—	—	—	—	1	1	13	17
Total .	3	—	—	—	—	1	1	16	21
Invaders:									
Direct rel.	8	1	—	—	5	2	5	26	47
Clan rel.	4	—	—	—	8	2	5	25	44
No rel. .	3	—	—	1	4	2	2	33	45
Total .	15	1	—	1	17	6	12	84	136
Newcomers:									
Direct rel.	—	—	—	—	2	1	5	13	21
Clan rel.	—	1	1	—	3	1	12	25	43
No rel. .	1	—	—	1	9	8	14	160	193
Total .	1	1	1	1	14	10	31	198	257
Grand total	19	2	1	2	31	17	44	298	414

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

system of ranking. I have assumed that the rarer the mark of rank the higher the rank it indicates. Table XXIII sets out the incidence of marks of rank among the 414 Administrative village headmen for whom I have recorded the data. In all, there were 24 headmen with scarlet headbands, 69 with boys' initiation ceremonies and 95 with girls' initiation ceremonies. I have given the holding of a scarlet headband the value of the reciprocal of the proportion of village headmen who hold that right, i.e. $414/24 = 17{\cdot}3$.

The value of holding a boys' initiation ceremony by the same procedure is: $414/69 = 6{\cdot}0$.

The value of holding a girls' initiation ceremony is: $414/95 = 4{\cdot}4$.

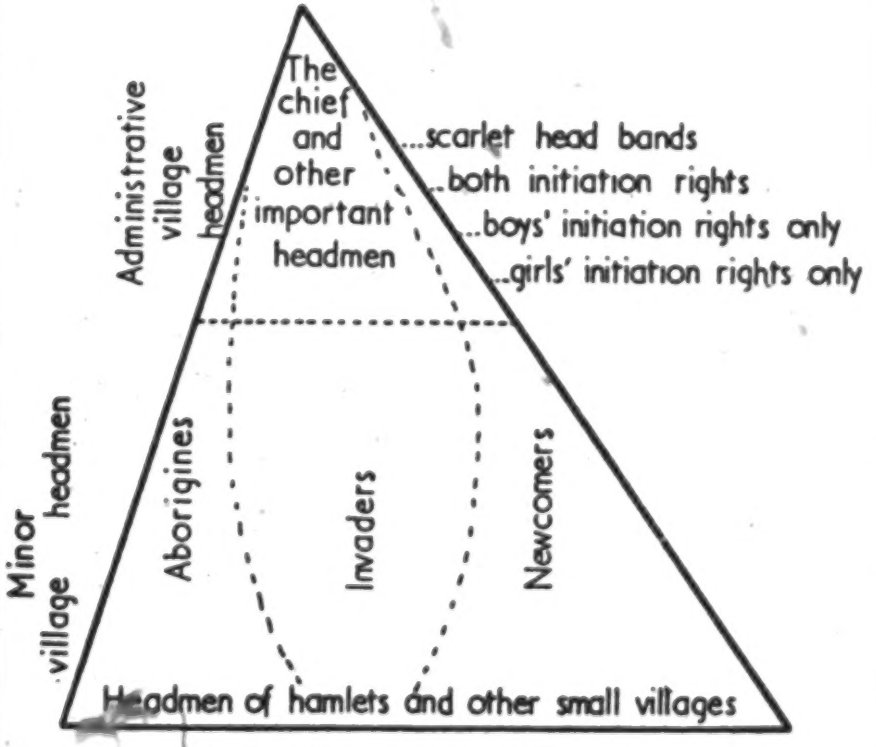

DIAGRAM 2. PARADIGM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

The value of holding the various combinations of rights then are these :

Scarlet headband and both initiation ceremonies	= 27·7
Scarlet headband and boys' initiation ceremony	= 23·3
Scarlet headband and girls' initiation ceremony	= 21·7
Scarlet headband alone	= 17·3
Both initiation ceremonies	= 10·4
Boys' initiation ceremony only	= 6·0
Girls' initiation ceremony only	= 4·4

We may now score the rank of headmen within any particular category by estimating the percentage score from a possible. For example, the score of the rank among Aboriginal headmen would be :

3 × 27·7 = 83·1
1 × 6·0 = 6·0
1 × 4·4 = 4·4
93·5 (expressed as a percentage of 21 × 27·7 = 16·1)

Using this method I have set out in Table XXIV the rank scores for headmen in the categories in Table XXIII. Table XXIV shows that on the whole ranking among the Invader

TABLE XXIV

RANK SCORES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE VILLAGE HEADMEN OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES

Aborigines :		
Chief's direct relatives	0	
Chief's clan relatives	50·0	
Chief's non-relatives	14·0	
All Aborigines		16·1
Invaders :		
Chief's direct relatives	25·4	
Chief's clan relatives	18·7	
Chief's non-relatives	13·1	
All Invader headmen		19·2
Newcomers :		
Chief's direct relatives	8·4	
Chief's clan relatives	11·3	
Chief's non-relatives	4·6	
All Newcomer headmen		6·1
All chief's direct relatives		19·6
All chief's clan relatives		15·8
All chief's non-relatives		6·8

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

making the oblation, pours the beer or sprinkles the flour at the root (*lipata*) of a shrine-tree. As would be consistent with this way of looking at the lineage, genealogically-distant ancestors are said to be 'below' (*pasi*), so that if a Yao wishes to say that a certain person was a matrilineal ancestor many generations back, he would say that he was 'very much below'.

The Concept of 'The Mother'

The matrilineal descendants of the founder look upon themselves as having been fed from the same breast and may express this by saying 'we are of one breast'.[1] Deep sentiment is attached to the idea of the mother among the Yao. There is, for example, a sharp distinction drawn between those women who have had children and those who have not. When a woman becomes pregnant for the first time, she is given instruction in child welfare when she undergoes a special ceremony (*litiwo*). This is a ceremony which is publicly announced and attended by most of her matrilineal and other kinswomen and acquaintances. No woman may attend this ceremony if she has not herself had a baby. Thus her change in status in the community is clearly shown by the public recognition of her condition, and the fact that she is initiated into secrets which are shared by other mothers only. Her position in the lineage is much enhanced when she becomes a mother. It is the most important step towards becoming a village founder herself.

The concept of 'the mother', in general, also appears in the boys' initiation ceremonies. Certain phases of ceremonies may be conducted only with the help of the women. They have to clap the rhythm to which the 'tailmen'[2] do their dances. Here all women are classified as 'mothers' and without their co-operation the ceremonies could not be conducted. During the same ceremonies three women appear with baskets of food on their heads. The tailmen remove the baskets and sacralize the

[1] *Tuli peŵele pamo.* The word *mlango*, a doorway, is also commonly used. The idea in essence is exactly the same. It is the concept of the children who come to settle around a woman's hut door. It is used as *ŵandu pamlango pao*, the people of his lineage section.

[2] The *m'mchira*. These are the functionaries in the initiation ceremonies. They carry medicated zebra tails during these ceremonies, and this gives them their names. See especially Stannus, 'The Wayao of Nyasaland', 229 ff.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

contents. Here once again the women, though they may have no boys in the initiation ceremony, are called 'the mothers'. The ritual co-operation of the mothers in the initiation ceremonies is paralleled by that of mothers and sons in political affairs: here sons are in charge of the villages, while their mothers and sisters form the nucleus of the localized kinship group, which in turn is the core of the village.

The ritual importance of the mother is nowhere more clearly seen than in the curse. The Yao believe that a mother may curse her child if he or she is disobedient or otherwise beyond control. Not many mothers do curse their children; the threat to curse seems to be more often used. Informants have told me of some mothers who have cursed their children, and the procedure and the wording of the curse have always been very similar. It is usually not applied to young children who could be punished by other means, but to adults and particularly adolescents. Usually the mother lifts her breast and points the nipple upwards saying, 'If you have never sucked from this breast nothing dreadful will happen to you.' The consequences of this are greatly feared. Where I have been told of curses, each time the child has either died suddenly shortly after the curse, or at least it has gone mad. The curse is vaguely supposed to operate through the ancestor spirits, but I could get no clear statement on how this happens.[1] Whatever the cause, however, the symbolic action of lifting the breast and the dire effects which are supposed to follow from this, indicate the importance of the mother in the lineage.

The Yao attach this sentiment, in general, not only to the mother, but also to all senior matrilineal female relatives. In general speech all female members of the matrilineage in ascending generations are 'mothers', and all members in the descending generations are 'children'. This fundamental relation of mother and child extends throughout the lineage. The Yao term *acinangolo*, used for the senior female members of the matrilineage, embodies this idea of 'the mothers'. More specifically, as far as men are concerned, the matrilineage is classified into

[1] Further evidence that the ancestor spirits are involved in the curse may be that madness is called *masoka*—spirits—and that it may be said of a madman that the spirits are beating him (*akumputa masoka*). A curse may be revoked by blowing water out of the mouth, an act which is also vaguely connected with the ancestor spirits.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

After the defeat of Kumtaja, Chikusi and his Angoni routed Kumtumanja, a brother of Malemya, who had also been making a nuisance of himself. Kumtumanja, who suffered from a large hydrocoele, is supposed to have lost his balance on account of this impediment, and fallen into a stream where he had stopped to drink and to have been drowned.

The Angoni still burned for more warfare, and Malemya, fearing that with his work done, they might prove a nuisance to him, turned them on to the Amangoche Yao around Blantyre. Thither they set off on a raiding expedition and returned to their own country via Chiradzulu. This raid took place in 1884.

During the next few years, Kawinga, who had always held a grudge against Malemya for having got ahead of him to the best country, occupied the chief with raiding and warfare. In 1891, Wandalama died, and was succeeded by Chisala, the son of his sister, Chisigere, and at the present time, he is the reigning Malemya.

It is of these Amachinga Yao under Malemya that the following notes are written. I have gone at some length into the history of these people in order to disarm criticism by those who, familiar with other sections of the Wayao, may not agree with all my statements.

Life History. Generally speaking, the life of the Yao native in the old days was full of ease spiced with the excitement of intertribal warfare. He cultivated his crops, kept a few goats and chickens, and relieved the monotony by hunting. Even domestic slavery was not a great hardship, nor did the Yao probably suffer from coast slave-raiding to the same extent as many other tribes. As children, they are wont to spend their days free from care, seldom reprimanded, and rarely or never physically chastised. During youth, the same easy lot is theirs, with the addition from time to time of a few small tasks; minor household duties for the girls, such as drawing water, sweeping the hut, and "minding" the baby, while the boys hoe or fetch and carry for their fathers in the village or in the bush. Left to their own devices, they play games,[1] dig out rats' nests, or shoot birds with bows and arrows.

Now, as formerly, when they are about five years old, the girls usually go to live with their grandmother who may thus have a number of children around her; or several girls of a somewhat more advanced age may sleep together in a hut dormitory. Boys of this age all live in a big hut called *nyumba ja chachanda*, "the boys' dormitory." This is their quarters until one by one they leave to get married. The girl, similarly, remains in the girls' dormitory or with her grandmother until she is taken in marriage.

Puberty. The first interruption of this placid life of youth is the onset of puberty or the first initiation ceremonies.[2] Formerly, these ceremonies took place after puberty but of late years, as is pointed out elsewhere, they are performed much earlier.

Child betrothal. Bethrothal in childhood or before birth is not uncommon. A woman learning that some friend of hers is pregnant will arrange that if a girl is born, her son will marry the friend's daughter, or a man taking a fancy to a little girl will select her as his

[1] Vide infra, p. 267. [2] Vide infra, p. 248.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

584 betrothed. In this latter case, the child lives with one of his wives and is brought up in his house.

● 881 When this girl first menstruates, she tells the man's wife who in turn informs her husband. He then goes out into the bush with his axe, while the wife reports to the young girl's mother and to the man's female relatives. The girl is put to rest on a mat in the hut, the women remaining with her after shutting and fastening the door. The man, meantime, cuts a strip of bark, hammers it out into a piece of cloth, and puts the cloth, wound round and round the stem of the tree from which he has taken it, on the roof of the hut where the girl lies. The first passer-by who notices this sign, spreads the news; then all the women in the village assemble and trill with their tongues to show their joy, while the women in the house sing.

Until the girl's menstrual period is over, the old women relatives sleep each night in her hut, and instruct her in the taboos relating to menstruation. The front door is kept closed, and exit for purposes of nature is made only through the back door. When the girl is up again, the fire in the hut is extinguished, the bark-cloth which she has worn and her sleeping mat are rolled up and put away in the veranda-room, and the girl, having procured clay, replasters the floor of the entire hut. A woman then brings fresh fire from another hut.

841 At subsequent menstrual periods, there is no ceremony. The girl, as is the custom of all women at such times, must sleep on a mat apart from her husband. Sexual intercourse is strictly forbidden under penalty of dire sickness. For the same reason, no menstruating woman may put salt in the food, etc. Until the girl's first menstrual period is over, the man to whom she is betrothed stays in the hut of another wife. Later, he may cohabit with the girl.

881 If the girl has not been to her initiation ceremony, *Chiputu*,[1] on returning to her husband's hut after this ceremony, the first coitus takes place in the veranda. It must be in-
833 complete, so that ejaculation takes place after withdrawal and the semen falls upon her cloth. This should be taken by the girl to some of the old women in the village who report on the proceedings. Should withdrawal not have taken place, the man is considered bad and the girl, unless doctored, may sicken. Later, ordinary cohabitation is allowed. This species of ceremonial coitus is called *Kuusa mauta* or in Chinyanja, *Ku-taya mafuta*, "to roll away the oil," referring to the oil with which the girl was anointed at *Chiputu*. A girl who has no betrothed, on returning from *Chiputu* to her grandmother is given medicine similarly to prevent her sickening.

584 *Betrothal and marriage in adult life.* Apart from child betrothal, when a man seeking a wife, sees a girl he fancies, he talks the matter over with his brother, uncle, or some friend, who then goes and makes overtures to the girl's uncle or brother, her guardian or *nposue*[2] as he is called. The *nposue* corresponds very closely to our idea of a god-parent; he may be called the *sponsor*. The word "surety" is used by Macdonald.[3]

[1] Vide *infra*, p. 269. [2] *Nposue* is a word adopted from the Chin. *Mbusue*.
[3] Macdonald, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 118.

3: Stanmus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

769 supposed to be the abode of spirits. Except in the case of chiefs, the Wayao never make any erections over their graves, like the Anyanja grass shelters, and the present-day Mohammedan earth imitations of Swahili tombs.

766 Chiefs, and the more important headmen, are usually buried in their own villages. Over the grave, a grass hut with a veranda is erected; the hut is covered with calico, and guns were formerly set in as veranda posts. Guns and ivory used to be buried with the corpse [567] but these Yao, I am told, never practised the barbarous custom of burying slaves with their chiefs. Information of the death of a chief was always conveyed to other chiefs by slaves who were kept by the recipient of the message.

Since the time of the old Malemya, the corpse of a chief always lies with its head in the direction of the old chief's grave. The grave is swept around, and the house pulled down as in the case of an ordinary man, but the grave-hut is rebuilt every year and never forgotten.

Since the burial of the dead is more or less correlated with the idea of planting seed from which progeny will spring, the natives will not bury a leper, believing that if they did so, leprosy would spring up all around them. Persons dying of an epidemic disease such as small-pox are dealt with in the same way. In these cases and in that of a man dying of ordeal poison, the body is enclosed in a mat and put up in a tree, a manner of disposing of the dead common among the Anguru and some Anyanja. Concerning death from dropsy, similar precautions are taken to those in the instance of a woman dying in childbirth,[1] and a tube is put down to the body from the surface of the ground.

A leper feeling that the end is near, will ask to be put in a hut built outside the limits of the burial ground. Here, provided with water and food for a few days, he will wait to die near the graveyard wherein he knows he cannot be buried.

[752] Anyone who is wounded with a spear or any other weapon is not taken into the village, but is kept in a hut in the bush. If death results, the mourning ceremonies differ somewhat from the ordinary rites and are much curtailed.

● 881 **Initiation Ceremonies.** Under this heading I propose to deal with the three ceremonies, *Lupanda*, *Chiputu* and *Litiwo*. They are occasions of great importance in the life of the native and their educative effect for the good of the tribe is far reaching.

At *Lupanda* (*Ndapula*) the young boys attend; at *Chiputu* the young girls go through their initiation and a side ceremony for young married men takes place, while *Litiwo* celebrates the first quickening with child. All the ceremonies are included in the word *Unyago*. Macdonald in *Africana* while referring to "the mysteries"[2] gives scant information about the ceremonies and has, presumably, without much knowledge of what goes on, condemned these customs like many others as furthering "absurd superstitions." He has failed to recognise that they are occasions when a large amount of useful advice is imparted, good manners are insisted on, and tribal custom is made known. Sexual questions are dealt with in these mysteries, and, though mixed up with a large amount of superstition, a

[1] Vide supra, p. 238. [2] Op. cit., vol. 2, ch. 7.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

code of morals is imparted which is far reaching for the social welfare. Macdonald makes the statement that "when a girl is initiated, she must find some man to be with her on her return; otherwise she will die."[1] Speaking with reserve as to what happened among the Amangoche around Blantyre Mission thirty years ago, I believe that no such practice is or was part of the Machinga Yao ceremonies. I have heard similar stories from other Europeans but I am inclined to discredit the whole idea as a practice among any section of Yao. Of the Anyanja, I cannot speak with the same conviction. Similarly I believe that the practice of artificial dilatation of the vagina is foreign to the Yao though possibly introduced in some places from the Swahili.

At *Lupanda* and *Chiputu*, the youth have to undergo a good deal of hardship which is all for their benefit, but year by year, as civilisation progresses, greater numbers forego these ceremonies. Their manners and morals suffer in consequence, and one is forced to acknowledge with the "old people" that the younger generation, decked in European clothes, with an air of smug self-conceit, no longer shows that decorum and self-respect which characterise the older, unsophisticated natives. My experience with regard to the attitude of natives to their initiation ceremonies differs from those related in *Africana* and I am afraid that Macdonald's native friends[2] were laughing at the inquisitiveness of the white man and not at their own experience.

In the *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* for 1913,[3] Dr. Davey and I gave a short account of part of the ceremony at *Lupanda*. Since then, through the friendliness of some of the chiefs in Zomba district, I have been present at several more ceremonies. I have collected a number of fresh observations and made a complete set of sketches of the *inyago* or images in relief made on the ground at one of these ceremonies. I have also a complete account of the boys' ceremonies from a celebrated master of ceremonies or *m'mchilo* as he is called, named Mlemala (Kumpika) of Che-chamba, in his own words, with his own songs. In writing down the songs, I have simply recorded the words, without giving the many full and partial repeats, and I have never attempted to score down the airs to which they are sung.

In the account given below I shall follow Mlemala's practice, giving such variations as I myself have observed. It will be understood that each *m'mchilo* has his own way of doing things so that there may be many variations in detail.

Lupanda: Every year, a certain number of boys in a group of villages reach the age at which the ceremony is commonly performed. In response to requests made by the village headmen, the chief appoints a date on which the *inyago* shall be held; this is usually towards the end of the dry season (September) but before the long grass of the bush has been burnt, as this affords the necessary privacy to those taking part.

[1] Op. cit., vol. 2, p. 126. [2] Ibid., p. 130.

[3] H. S. Stannus and J. B. Davey, 'The initiation ceremony for boys among the Yao of Nyasaland', (Jour. Anth. Inst., London, 1913, vol. 43, p. 119–132).

[88] [791] The *chief*, having appointed a day on which the ceremonies shall begin, sends a messenger with a fowl to a medicine-man whom he asks to conduct the ceremonies. The medicine-man is called *m'michila* " he of the tails." He carries his medicines stuffed in the tail-skin of a gnu or sobra and we shall see that his tail or tails play a very important part. Having sent word back to the *chief* of his acceptance of the invitation, he gets his wife to prepare some fresh castor-oil with which he will remake his medicines, and sends out the boys of the village to collect firewood. A big bonfire is made and dancing goes on all that night in his village. Early next morning he returns to the door of his hut where his wife [201] hands him his " tails." He then immediately departs for the village of the *chief*. His wife trills with her tongue, this being the sign of his departure, and dancing men, some friend (often his brother) who acts as his *chief* assistant, his wife, and others will go with him.

[539] He signals his approach to the chief's village by singing:

"*Ku*	*msa"ko*	*ngwisa,*	*ngwisa'ni!*	*Tinguicha!*"
"You	at the	village!		I shan't be long!"

As he enters the village, all the women hail his arrival by trilling the tongue (*ku-lulita*). He goes straight to the open space in front of the chief's house where the *chief* meets him. The *chief* immediately goes into his house and producing a cloth, gives it to the *m'michila* who then places his " tail " on the ground, (*ndulila*, "things put down"); these are the signs of the compact. A house is given to the *m'michila* wherein he may rest and sleep.

That night, all the mothers of the boys who are to undergo their initiation, now called *usali* (sing. *musali*), pound flour for the morrow. Early the next morning, the *m'michila* visits the place where the pounding is going on and collects a little flour from each woman's basket into a small basket he himself carries.

The *chief* then gives him a cock and a hen, an axe and a hoe; with these he goes off accompanied by the fathers of the *usali* to the spot where *Lupanda* will be made. Arrived there, he first points out the spot where his own hut is to be erected. This is quickly built, followed by the shelters for the *usali*.

The cock and hen are then killed and cooked, also some porridge; the entire fowl is cooked; the liver is not cooked separately. When it is ready, the *m'michila* takes a piece of the liver from the pot and some porridge from the other pot together in one hand and then throws them into a little hole where his " tail " has been resting. At this spot, *Lupanda* is made. The *m'michila* then partakes of both again and eats; after he has finished, the other men eat.

[532] After the building of the shelters is finished, fire-wood is collected. On the roofs of the grass shelters figures of animals in grass may be strung up on posts, but they have no definite significance.

In the meantime in the village, the *chief* has had *mbepesi* (ceremonial flour) prepared. It is made from millet by his head wife, who must not be near a menstrual period.

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When the sun sets, all the boys to undergo the ceremonies (*unli*) together with their sponsors or guardians, *akamusi*, (*nkamusi* sing.) are called together to the village open-space (*pang'anya*). The *nkamusi* attends his ward throughout the ceremony; he may be an elder brother, an uncle, or someone else who volunteers for the service. 881

The *unli* are lined up and headed by a "leader," *nachilompola*, who is usually the most important boy, perhaps a relative of the chief; thus they pass one by one in front of the chief who anoints each on the forehead with *mbepesi* from a small basket. As each boy passes, his mother runs up and throws into the basket a string of beads or nowadays small silver coins. When all have passed, the chief sends some near relative with the basket still containing some flour and the beads or money to the *n'michila* who is waiting at *Lupanda*.

This is his signal to prepare to receive the *unli*; he dresses, and accompanied by drummers goes to meet the file of *unli*. The *unli* accompanied by their *akamusi*, their mothers and sisters, sing as they approach: 881 539 533

"*Twaje kanga (anganga) akakuli tuuje!*"
"Let us go back, perhaps there is no ceremony!"

The *n'michila* as he meets them sings:

"*Anachichi palwina nawa wanache'wa kalaba likomba kwiza naiya!*"
"Why to come with them these children to leave (a small drum) to come with it?"

and follows this in answer to the song of the *unli* with:

"*Ku akuli akauje,* (Repeat) *Kwa kwa!* (Chorus) *Mkauje wose!*"
"To the village don't go back. Don't go back all!"

The *unli* now on the outskirts of *Lupanda* are formed into a ring, behind them their *akamusi* and behind these their mothers and sisters. Then the *n'michila* leads the way to *Lupanda* singing:

"*Likomba lya ndemba!*"
"Spoor of an elephant!"

Next, he calls all the mothers to form in two lines resting at right angles on *Lupanda* and sings to them:

"*Kapungu tula pasi kwin'ani kunapali alonga!*"
"The eagle lighted on the ground as in the air there is not near relationship!"

The *n'michila* and his chief assistant each provided with a "tail" strike lightly on the basket which each woman has on her head; then each with a hand on the basket, they lift it down to the ground. Starting with the mother of the "leader," they go round to each mother in turn. The *n'michila* then to the sound of drums and clapping by the women dances and runs round peeping into each basket exclaiming, "I see so and so in this basket!" saying noses, penes, medicine, women's pudenda and so on, after which the women take the baskets of food away to the boys' shelters. The *n'michila* next sings: 881

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"Tinyumbile mwanangu ku Lupunda, pinga uje'pa kundonda mangunguu!"
"I will go and bring my child to *Lupunda*, when I am going home I feel nervous!"

and running round he seizes hold of one of the *wuli* and makes him sit down at *Lupunda*, continuing this until he has placed them all in a circle round *Lupunda*. He then sings a song about the little basket which the chief sent him containing the remains of the *mbepesi* flour:

"Kasolo anyasa akwesilaya, anpele mbwemunde, anaa!"
"Little basket the owner asks for it back, give me beans, mother!"

His wife who has been waiting in his hut nearby brings him the basket. Holding it in his hands, he prays to the spirits of his ancestors and all the previous medicine-men to whom his medicine-talis have belonged, invoking their aid that the ceremonies may go well.

Still holding the basket he begins to dance, singing:

"Apakule mbepesi jaa!"
"Let them (us) smear flour their (Let us baptise them!)"

and dipping his right elbow into the basket he smears each *mwali* on the forehead with the *mbepesi* flour. He then goes into his hut and fetches a bundle of powdered roots (which no woman may touch), medicine called *mtibulo*, that is, a medicine used for its aphrodisiac properties. Holding the medicine between the palms of his uplifted hands, he starts singing:

"Kukusimanga kuchipopola, twatwanga mkamu!"
"I cannot find out how to untie this, we tied (with) my brother-in-law!"

He is immediately surrounded by his assistants and the drummers, who dance round him, all holding their hands about his own, after which he unfastens the bundle of medicine and puts a little on the tongue of each *mwali*, beginning with the leader. He then takes some sweet-beer made by the chief's wife and pouring it into his old medicine-gourd, he mixes in some *mtibulo* and gives some to each *mwali* to drink after which he sings:

"Amwela,[1] *amwela mwanje wa imanga, chakulya mandonda*
"You have drunk a mixture of water and maize flour, of eating eggs
achilecha penepano, Amwela, amwela ndundile nakuwa;
you stop now, you have drunk (but) I have passed water (in it);
wuli(ji) kalowuka!"
you thought to be clever!"

[30] Next he goes into his hut with the small basket containing the *mbepesi* and paints his assistant with the flour, a semicircle round the forehead, a line down the middle of the face, a band across the chest, a line down each arm with rings round the arms and forearms, and a line down the middle of the back. They go out again into the ring and while the *m'michila* sings:

[1] This may be a reference to *mwela*, the sacrificial cup.

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"Nampopo landela chisompo amwali ku malombo kwendela kwaila!"
"The lizard casts lots boys to graves as to going to die!"

his assistant with the basket held in his mouth acts the part of the *nampopo*, a medium-sized lizard with brilliant blue body and orange head which bobs its head up and down. The assistant lies on his belly and bobs his head and shoulders up and down, lifting himself on his hands. (Children often clap their hands as they watch the *nampopo* bobbing up and down "like a lot-caster" and call out to it to cast lots for them.) The assistant then crawls up to the leader and puts the basket on his head. Bowing his face to the ground for a moment, he again takes the basket and places it on the head of the next *mwali* and so on all around.

After this the *wali* go and sit near the bonfire which is not yet lighted, while the *m'michila* sings to the women:

"Ngand(a) atalecha/ kajoola/"
"The beans! Let him cook a cricket."

and the women give him a basket of beans with which he makes sifting movements, singing: "Shall I throw them away, shall I put them in the cooking pot?" while the women clap.

His assistants are then told to go and light the bonfire. He himself goes to his hut and places his "tails" in the *mbepesi* basket, and carrying it to the bonfire, he throws some of the flour on the fire, "to regulate its heat." This is the sign to begin the dancing which goes on all night while the *wali* lie round the fire, each lying with his head on the waist of the next, the leader in front.

In the early morning of the second day, the *m'michila* holding his "tails" in his hands runs astraddle over all the reclining *wali* and facing the same way, runs back, after which the boys are called.

He sings a song:

"Mamba (a) 'go kundumaga/"
"The red ants those bite!"

and he pretends to pick them off the boys. After this, he sings:

"Natulemi kenge mkakuliguse/ (mkakuliguse)!"
"Push clitoris little mother!"

as he goes to each *mwali* and throws his "tail" into the boy's hands, receives it back and then puts it on his head till the mother places a coin on his head which is the payment made to the assistant. *Ku-kupwa* = to occur; *apakupwa* = not at home; *mkakuliguse* = is it not at home, is it not present? The meaning of the phrase in the song is, "Is your mother not here to pay the fee?" *Mkakuliguse* is a pun on *mkakulupwa*, "little mother." This is followed by another song:

"Kapinde'pwa, upwa unga mitiki/"
"The little lemur, you jump from trees to trees!"

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as he climbs a tree with his back to the trunk; at the top he hangs by his legs and looks down on the crowd, his assistants doing the same. Coming down he runs to his hut; throwing his "tail" into the air and catching it again, he enters.

This is about nine A.M.; all rest till about eleven o'clock, the *wali* meanwhile eating food cooked by their mothers in the shelters. About eleven o'clock, the *m'michila* takes a big gourd and putting his "tails" into it covered with a calico cloth, gives it to his assistant who carries it on his head and follows him to a pool of water, accompanied by all the women except any young ones who have not borne children. He invites them to go "crab hunting."

At the pool he enters the water with his assistants round him, except the assistant with the gourd, who stands on the bank. The *m'michila* makes movements as of hunting for crabs in the water singing:

"Chisesangala ngalili ngali wanga wosuma!"
"There must be hunting otherwise I should have had to eat porridge my without relish!"

He pretends to catch a crab and his hands are immediately grasped by his assistants in the water who all help him to convey it to the gourd as the "tail" is taken out of it.

The crowd then returns to *Lupanda* to enact the *nambande* ceremony. *Nambande* is a representation of an animal made of bark on a frame-work covered with mud and painted with flour in spiral markings, hence the name (*mbande* is a part of a spiral shell from the Zanzibar coast much prized by natives as an ornament). The animal is really the sable antelope with horns and the *m'michila's* "tails" in place; there is a man inside it. It is made perhaps a mile away and then brought near to *Lupanda* and placed in a cleared area.

The *m'michila* on his return from crab-hunting has gone into his hut and put on his full regalia; then, accompanied by his drummers, he comes out and is immediately followed by the *wali* and the rest of the crowd; knowing where the *nambande* will be put, he leads the people in the opposite direction calling out to them to look out for the antelope. They, of course, all look in the wrong direction, so when he knows *nambande* is in place, he wheels around and sings, "There is the animal!"

In the old days the chief was present for this, a platform being built for him. When the *nambande* appeared, he gave his hunters much powder (no bullets) and they shot at the animal. The animal would fall as if hit and the *m'michila* would approach to claim it as his beast, but it would promptly get up and charge, to be driven off by the crowd, whereupon it would run away into the bush.

Lots are then cast by the *m'michila*, using a tortoise shell stuffed with medicine. The *wali* all stand in a circle with their mothers behind them, while the *m'michila* goes to the leader and throws the tortoise at the boy's chest. *If* it sticks there, all is well and he proceeds to each boy. Should the shell not stick on the boy's chest, it portends ill-luck to that individual and he has to be dealt with further. The *m'michila*, holding his "tail," and his assistant holding a horn of medicine, stand back to back, with the boy between

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them. They then rub the boy up and down with their backs, after which the assistant throws the horn at the boy's chest. If it sticks, the bad-luck is overcome and the women will trill joyfully with their tongues; if it drops to the ground, evil is foretold and forebodings as to the boy's fate at *Ndapala* are whispered round. He is given further medicine against the predicted evil, but lots will not again be cast about him.

Next the *m'michila* sings:

"*Nanchachera* *naumbo,* *wanjoko* *ngunawe,* *jisu* *ngumoje*
"The one who scrapes hairs, (your) father is still living, come that I may shave thee,
nanchachera *naumbo,* *wanjoko* *ngunawe!*"
the one who scrapes hairs, (your) father is still living! (Chorus) "*Jondi, jondi!*"

Jondi is a word meaning "sticking up in all directions" and refers to the hair.

One assistant holds a pot of water, a second, a leaf of the *mpembu* tree, and the *m'michila* a razor. They approach the leader; water is rubbed on the forehead by the first assistant, the second smears the place with the leaf. The *m'michila* then removes a little tuft of hair from the boy's forehead and puts it in the boy's left palm, followed by the nail parings from the left hand, and a tuft of hair from the back of the head. This is done to each *mwali* in turn after which he sings:

"*Tuumoje* *lipalamandula!*"
"Let us shave them" (*ku-palamandula,* to trim by shaving)

as he walks round them, after which the boys go to their mothers who are allowed to trim the hair on the forehead in any way they like. This may take ten minutes, after which they return, still holding their hair and nails in their hands. As they return, the *m'michila,* thrusting his "tail" under the left arm, starts off, all the *wali* falling in behind him, and thus he leads the way into the bush accompanied only by the *wali,* singing:

"*Kapili* *ka* *mwalo* *amwali!*"
"The Kapili snake the mwalo tree *amwali!*"

He searches through the forest until he finds *chikula,* a small dome-shaped ant hill about a foot high. He carries his "tail" under his arm and a reed-buck's horn of medicine in his hand. Arrived at the *chikula,* he chips the top off the ant hill with the horn and his "tail," scoops a hole in the exposed surface with the horn, and then smears this hollow with medicine from the horn. The leader then approaches and drops his hair and nail parings little by little into the hole, followed by each *mwali* in turn; each immediately turns about and never looks back on the ant hill. When all have done so, the *m'michila* sets the top of the ant hill back into its place, having the "tail" and medicine horn in his axilla; he then turns about and becomes the last of the file as they march back to *Lupanda* while he sings the same song as before.

This particular ceremony is the most sacred of the *Unyago* as it is known only to the *wali.* It is the sign of burying the past of childhood. If another *m'michila* could find such

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a place, he would take part of it and its contents and add to his own medicine "to make him a more powerful *m'michila*."

On the way back, the *m'michila* takes a piece of bamboo in his right hand and when he comes to a *mjombo* sapling, the boys all surround him in a ring; with the "tail" in his left hand he strikes the *mjombo* sapling, and as it rebounds, he strikes it with the bamboo; while the sapling swings backwards and forwards, he sings:

"*Ngoma ngomoma mlasi si mjombo!*
"Striking I have struck together the bamboo and the mjombo tree!
kalinolela' amwali kalinolela!"
sharpen for yourself"

The *m'michila* takes both his "tails." Holding them in his left hand against the *mjombo* sapling, the bushy part of the tails uppermost, and in the other hand a stick smeared with beeswax, he rubs the sapling at a point just below the "tails," still singing the song given above. The stick is said to represent an axe. After this, he takes a real axe and cuts off the top of the sapling. Then all the boys seize the sapling and work the bark off without cutting it anywhere, while the *m'michila* continues to sing. The bark he puts in his armpit and sings as he jumps about:

"*Tinjiguila peyenje, (lichenje) chipuluka guluka!*"
"I shall fall into the pit, jumping about here and there!"

When they arrive at *Lupanda*, the *m'michila* unseen goes to his own hut to make string from the bark, the boys to the place where *Lupanda* is made. This is at about three in the afternoon.

When the string is ready, the *m'michila* takes it to cross-roads, plaits it into necklaces, and anoints them with medicine for the *wali*. On his return to his own house, the mothers have cooked porridge for the boys, and the baskets of food are put ready at *Lupanda*. The *m'michila* then steps in and sings:

"*Tolo (nji) winji wana amao, woenpe wakwaqawilapa!*"
"(A) little mouse (has) many children, mother, all are to be fed!"

As he does so, he takes some food in his hand and puts it into the mouth of the leader, and so on all round, while all the people keep at a distance. Then with a hoe he makes a small mound where *ching'unda-ng'unda* will be erected and puts on it a little of the *mbepesi* from his house. Here he seats the leader and round him sit all the other *wali*. The *m'michila* then sings:

"*Tinawula chuma changu lalo kwakuja'ko akwacapala ngasuja!*"
"I will take off beads my today where they go to it seems they will never come back!"

[1] *Kwula*, to whet a knife.

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He collects from the boys' necks the beads they are wearing, lifting them off with his medicine horn; these are all his perquisites, to be sent off to his house. He then starts singing:

"*Nochilongolo Lupondo nguma ngulungwa yolele jakuzomaga, mchila!*"
"The leader (of) *Lupondo* (is) an animal big worth killing with a spear, tail!"

This means to the leader's relatives that the boy is worth a spear; one is promptly brought and leaned against the leader; the *m'michila* steps up and taking it, bends the spearhead and sends it towards his house. He then sings:

"*Njojeka nati kalungu kwejeka nati*
"Things which are put to lean up against even little sugar cane to lean things up against even
kapamba kwejeka!"
little arrow!"

The relatives then bring all kinds of presents and lean them against the boys; these are the perquisites of the dancing men. The *wali* go away to eat now with their *akamusi* behind the shelters. The *akamusi* tie up any food that is left in leaves, for later use. They then return to the roughly-made *ching'undang'unda* where the *m'michila* meets them. The *wali* stand in a circle round him and outside them in a ring, the parents, while the leader is set on the *ching'undang'unda* mound.

The *m'michila* sings:

"*Anonjati ndonga ya mto'po tapani ulandi, ankunga, ambiranja!*"
"You of the buffalo hair (lit. feathers) on the head you put flour *ankunga* call me."

as he then goes around and touches each *mwali* with his "tail." The idea here is that the *wali* with flour on their foreheads resemble buffaloes which have white patches on their horns, and they will therefore be as strong as these beasts in the bush whither they are about to go.

The *m'michila* then runs away to his hut and breaking a hole through the back, makes for the bush. The assistants know this disappearance is the signal of his departure for *Ndapala*. This happens about four o'clock. All exclaim "*Aoaah!*"; (to exclaim thus is *kwamira*, "to exclaim with apprehension.") The assistants head off in the same direction, followed by the *akamusi* and their *wali*, while the mothers of the boys who may never see them again, throw sticks on the path as they run away as the sign of forgetting their sons for the time being.

All the men will also accompany the *wali* until they find the *m'michila*. He having left the chief's basket at *Lupondo* has brought some of the *mbepesi* with him in his own basket. One of the men brings a gourd full of water; the *m'michila* pours some of the water into his basket of flour and gives a drink of this first to the leader and then to each *mwali*

in turn. After drinking, they sit down while the *m'michila* gives instructions that here they sleep tonight. He takes his basket and starts to run back to *Lupanda*, singing:

"Ku	*tenjile*	*pilaleipa*	*achamboje*	*kutenjiva*	*ku M'unde!"*
"Where	we went to		masters		to *Munde!"*

Then going to the back of his hut, he enters and takes a piece of bark left there bent up into a dish containing medicine which has been put in by an assistant. This assistant holds in his hand the neck of one of the fowls which was killed at *Lupanda*. The *m'michila* washes his face and chest with medicine to cleanse his eyes and then leans forward to the assistant and bites a piece off the neck of the fowl which the assistant holds out, and eats it. This is *ku-lumiva*, "to taste a small piece," often the liver, before starting to eat the flesh; this is generally done by the most important person. The *m'michila* has been followed by his assistants who do as he has done. They all follow him next round the cooking place for the boys at *Lupanda*, each standing for a moment on the stones which have supported the cooking pots, while the women sit looking on sadly. He begins to dance and the women join in, singing *likwata*. He then calls the parents of the *wali* and leads them to where the bonfire was. There assembled, he tells them they must not bathe, and that tomorrow morning early, porridge is to be sent to the *wali* which must be prepared by a woman who has had connection with her husband and who has not washed her hands; this is supposed to make the boys strong. Early in the morning, the husband, who likewise has not washed his hands, carries the food to the *wali* and personally gives portions to each boy to eat.

When they have partaken of the food, the circumcision is performed by the *m'michila* who has returned the same morning early. The *wali* one by one, commencing with the leader, go forward a little to the place where the *m'michila* awaits them. Each *mwali* is accompanied by his *mkamwai* who commonly says, "Come along and you shall eat of the honey made by the bumblebee." Such honey is very sweet and called *maoma*. This refers in sarcastic terms to the pain the boy is about to undergo. The boy squats down, leaning back on his *mkamwai* who supports him, while the medicine-man, having warned the lad not to cry out, performs the circumcision with a small knife called *chisondo*. It is a triangular knife with one cutting edge and a handle produced from the opposite corner. Properly the Yao method is, I believe, only to nick the free margin of the prepuce just to the right of the middle line near the frenum, but complete circumcision is now commonly practiced, possibly as the result of Swahili influence. In this case, the prepuce is seized and held by the fingers, and division made by a circular incision without using a clamp or forked stick. A dressing of charcoal and oil may be applied or medicine is chewed in the mouth and the saliva spat on the wound and the boy sent on to rest under some convenient tree.

When all the *wali* have been circumcised, they are gathered together in one place and the *m'michila* dividing them into groups, puts on the neck of the leader of each group a necklace made of plaited bark from the *mjombo* tree:[1] these necklaces contain medicine against all evils - witchcraft, attack by lions, etc.

[1] Vide supra, p. 254.

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against all evils — witchcraft, attack by lions, etc. The *akamusi* then set about building shelters in which the *wali* will remain during their term of instruction. According to the number of the *wali* so the number of places where shelters are built may vary from one, two or three, to as many as eight. Each of these places is called *Ndapala*. They may be many miles apart and are so placed for the convenience of the mothers in various groups of villages who bring the food daily to the group of boys from those villages.

The boys when they originally left the village were wearing a large bark-cloth covering, with beads and calico, which latter articles have been taken by the *m'michila* and his assistants. At *Ndapala* they wear simply a loin-cloth of bark.

During their stay at *Ndapala*, the *wali* are given animal names by the *akamusi* who carry on the instruction of the boys until their return to *Lupanda*, the *m'michila* having gone back to his village immediately after the circumcision. The names given to the boys are commonly names of beasts of prey such as Alikule (*likule* = the jackal), Achisuwi (*chisuwi* = the leopard), etc.

Certain restrictions as to diet are laid upon the *wali* by the *m'michila*, e.g. no meat of an animal killed by a beast of prey, no mudfish, *likumbale*. He will not allow any villager to visit *Ndapala* after seven P.M. and visitors may only be men who have been through the ceremony. An uncircumcised man is called *mbalale*, one who has not been to his *Unyago*.

Other restrictions as to foodstuffs may be made by the *akamusi*, generally in connection with the mythical origin of such food substances. A finger-shaped yam called *lipeta* is taboo, as it is said to have first sprung from the grave of a leper, the inference being obvious. After the *Unyago*, the boys have to undergo a special doctoring before they may partake of them. Bananas and rice are similarly refused them, the latter on account of a story to the effect that rice grew from the nostrils of a dead man, the idea doubtless having relation to the resemblance of rice grains to maggots. Fish is denied them by some masters of ceremonies, as it is said to have originated from the diaper of a woman which she threw away while bathing.

Each *m'michila* may have special observances of his own. One near Zomba caused all cassava to be roasted in a certain way. Rows of pieces of cassava were placed in split bamboo spits and so roasted before the fire in the manner of fish. If roasted in the ordinary way, the cassava would split and show the white floury material inside, signified by the verb *ku-lapula*. If this is eaten by the *wali*, it is said that the preputial wound would reopen.

The length of time spent at *Ndapala* varies from four weeks to as long as three or four months. In the first place they must wait till the circumcision wounds of all are completely healed. Delay may be occasioned by complications having arisen in some cases. Again, permission to return may be withheld by the chief for some reason or other. Should one of the *wali* die at *Ndapala*, the body is buried out in the bush and nothing is said to the parents until after the ceremonies are over and all have returned to the village.

881 During the period of seclusion at *Ndagala*, rigorous discipline is maintained among the boys, the day commencing with bathing in a stream whither the *wali* are driven before sunrise, a favorite form of punishment being to make the boy sit for hours in the cold water. Other disciplinary measures take the form of frequent beatings. At one *Unyago* I know of, there was a kind of mutiny among the boys. The *akamusi* from a nearby *Unyago* were called in and the boys received very severe "hidings" for their trouble.

For the entire time, the *wali* are occupied in receiving instruction given by their *akamusi*, on the discipline of manhood; they are taught native custom as applied to their relations with their fellows, an exacting code of etiquette to be observed to their elders, and the observances of married life. They learn to become proficient in the arts associated with their sex — the making of baskets, mats, traps, etc., the method of agriculture, drumming and dancing. They stay up late into the night listening to the stories of their tribal history.

Until such time as the circumcision wound is healed, each boy must cook his own food, after which food is brought ready cooked by his mother.

Posted in the bush a little way from the encampment are some of the boy's guardians, *akamusi* or *alombwe* (sing. *mlombe*) who act as pickets to warn off innocent or intentional intruders. They are armed with sticks, etc., and give pretty severe treatment to any inquisitive persons they catch. A visitor to *Ndagala* may be required by them to give visible evidence of not being *mbalale*. The mothers who come with food call from a distance, "*Alomwe ndute!*" Answer is made, "*Atutulile tulye!*" "Put down for us that we may eat."

881 273 When the chief decides that the time has come for the return from *Ndagala*, he sends for the *m'michila*. Arrived in the village with medicine which he has collected, he is given millet by the mother of the leader from which the malt for beer making is to be prepared, also a cock and a hen and a pot. Into the pot he puts a tail feather from the cock and one from the hen, together with his medicine; then the millet, and water is poured on, after which he goes to *Ndagala* and shaves the heads of all the *wali* beginning with the leader and then returns to his own village. When the millet has sprouted, the woman takes it out to dry on a mat, and the two feathers and the packet of medicine are laid on the mat by its side. From this time, all the mothers are busy preparing malted grain for brewing beer, and, when it is ready, the *m'michila* is again called to the village. He orders the women to prepare for brewing, to bring firewood, their brewing pots, and stones to support them on the fire. These are all set round in a circle in the presence of the chief and headmen. Across the stones the *m'michila* lays his "tails" and on the firewood he sprinkles some medicine; the "tails" are then removed and the pots set on the fire. Commencing with the pots belonging to the mother of the leader, he acts similarly all round. The following day, he again visits the scene of the brewing. Putting his "tails" on the ground, he dips from each pot in turn and pretending to drink the sweetbeer from the dipper, he empties it into other pots carried by his assistants. From his own pots, he then empties

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some sweetbeer into a big gourd. These his assistants will carry away, together with a hoe, to *Lupanda*, whither the *m'michila* now goes to remain while brewing goes on for four days.

During their stay at *Lupanda*, the *m'michila* and his assistants live on flour and chickens begged from the mothers of the *wali*. On the first day nothing is done; on the second day they begin making the *Inyago* or figures in relief of animals, etc., to be described later; *Namungumi* is made this day. On the third day the other figures are made and on the fourth day *ching'undang'unda*. Into the ground where *ching'undang'unda* is made, some of the strong beer, known as *ngunga*, which is added to the flour and water mixture on the fourth day as signified by *ku-kolojela*, is poured by the *m'michila*.

When the work at *Lupanda* is finished, the *m'michila* carrying his " tail " leads his assistants wearing their feather headdresses back to the chief's village singing:

"Ningalola ukana kunga akolojela ku musi, mulungu achamao!
"I must go and see beer perhaps they have mixed at the village, ancestors oh dear!
Chilawila chamajusi ngalya sona ningawila sala!"
The going out of a day or two ago if I had not taken tobacco I would have died of hunger!"

Arriving at the village where the brewing is going on, the *m'michila* takes a cup and putting his " tails " on the ground, he dips into the pot of beer belonging to the leader's mother, pours some on his " tail," and then drinks some. Then he puts more into a gourd, together with some medicine, and going up to the chief who sits in his verandah overlooking the brewing place, he kneels, and first drinking a little himself, he presents the drinking gourd of beer to the chief who drinks and then returns the cup to the *m'michila* who finishes it. Picking up his " tail," he then goes straight back to *Lupanda* while his assistants with some men nominated by the chief go round choosing pots of beer in turn. The assistants choose by striking a pot with a medicine-tail. These pots of beer are then put aside to cool, while moderate drinking begins in the chief's house. This takes place in the morning of the day on which the *wali* will return from *Ndagala* to *Lupanda*, and in the afternoon, the people from the villages will go out to *Lupanda* to take part in the return. The return is made about sunset.

The *wali* at *Ndagala* are put into their shelters and the doorways barricaded. At sunset or just after, the place is set on fire and the *wali* have to charge their way through the back of the shelters. They then form in line, wearing a slip of bark cloth round their loins and over this, a kind of kilt called *magajawisa* if made of frilled-out bark-cloth, or *majenga* if made of palm leaves. Accompanied by the *akamusi*, they proceed towards *Lupanda*, each carrying a stick of smouldering wood and an unlit torch of bark-cloth.

The burning of the huts at *Ndagala* has been the sign to the *m'michila* that the *wali* have left; he puts round his waist a bark cloth belt, *chambo*, and a calico sash round his chest with the ends hanging down behind and on his head he wears the *liunga* headdress made of the feathers of *chiunga*, the widow-bird. In each hand he carries the tail of gnu or zebra, held right end up, with the hollow end filled with " medicine." Thus arrayed, he goes out

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along the path towards *Ndapala*, to meet the *wali*, accompanied by the drummers and all the women, singing:

"*Makumba* *kwisopola* *sulu!*"
"The lemurs down the stream!"

When he meets the *wali*, they all throw their lighted torches at him and he flees back to *Lupanda*. The *wali* continue their procession and are brought round to the still unlit bonfire known as *chilangali*.

At the order of the *m'michila*, the fire is now lighted and the *wali* lie around it. The *m'michila* again appears with the drummers, and all the women and other villagers form a big circle round about. He sings:

"*Chombolo* *chikwesja* *mbeja,* *wandu'wo* *chikwajopopa!*"
"The (ford) fire is now flaring up people these it is afraid of them!"

Dancing and singing then go on all night while the *wali* lie round the fire where they are allowed to sleep. As dawn approaches, the *m'michila* again sings:

"*Chonde!* *Mwalira,* *amwali,* *Amwase* *mwanache,* *mbale*
"Please! it is crying, you girl, arrange the child, the girdle of beads round its waist
wanache *ukapapwi!*"
lest there be exposure of the person!"

Amwase: a woman carries her child bound to her back by a piece of cloth passing under her own arms and tied in front. If the cloth gets loose, she jogs the child up higher on her back as she rearranges the cloth; this is what is meant by *amwase*.

The *akamwali* waken the *wali* as the *m'michila* sings:

"*Kwambulira* *wuhu!*"
"To nose after the scent!"

That is, he is looking about for the *inyago*. He then leads them off to *nalumgumi*, the whale, the first of the *inyago*.

I shall first go on with an account of Mlemala's practice to the end of the ceremony and then discuss the *inyago* in greater detail.

Arrived at *nalumgumi*, the *m'michila* sings;

"*Nalumgumi* *nalilanda,* *nalumgumi* *asiwili* *kuchiku!*"
"The whale in the pool, the whale has blocked the ford!"

after which he straddles the head of the whale while one of his assistants does the same at the tail and thus sitting, they do a kind of wriggling dance, singing to the time marked by clapping of hands:

"*Nalumgumi* *atundumula, eh! eh!* (Repeat) *Apalapala* *wate kundema;* *apalapala*
"The whale showed his back above the water, eh! There it did fail me; there
wate kunumba; *Kwa, hwa, hwa, hwa!*"
it did half break;"

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The *m'michila* then gets off on the left side, his assistant on the right and they stand in the shallow depressions. The *m'michila* starts asking riddles; he says, "*Ndesi* (riddle)!" and is answered by his assistant "*Jiicha* (let it come)!" Here is one:

"*Kanyere, kapila pasi!*"
"The little mouse it has defecated, it has gone into the ground!"
Answer: "*Michipa!* (roots)!"

He then goes round the crowd for the answer — if they cannot guess, they say, "*Ali anyene,*" "it is yourself (to answer)." There are hundreds of such riddles.

The *m'michila* points to the tusks depicted in the *chinyago* and tells the people, "Long ago this used to be an elephant; look at the tusks." The hump at its back he tells them is the same as *ching'undang'unda* which they will find farther along.

They pass next to *mbunda*, the zebra; a pair, male and female, is always figured.

"*Ajiji nguti mbunda ja mbuje Achilemala! Yoenye yekola!*"
"This one is it not the zebra of Mister Mlemala! everything (is) beautiful!"

Sometimes a story is told to show that the zebra used to go to the sea to drink but seeing the whale, he ran away and came to the country of the python.

Then to *nato*, the python; he sings:

"*Anaato kwajanji! yuwe, eja! Yoenpe yekola!*"
"You python come and answer! all (is) beautiful!"

At the crocodile, *nyoena*, he sings:

"*Chenyoena ulamba, yuwe! eja! akupona mungulugulu mwai!*"
"Mr Crocodile cleverness, he sleeps at the side of the water!"

At *mwesi*, the moon:

"*Amwesi ulamba, yuwe! eja, amaa!*"
"You moon cleverness, !"

Next, they come to *wakolele ukasa*, the people drunk with beer. Two men lie on the ground, feet to feet with nothing on; the pudenda are covered with bark-cloth and the whole of their bodies painted with earth and flour to look like two female figures in earth. The song is:

"*Wakolele ukasa: kumlole amwali, wakolele ukasa!*"
"Drunk with beer: come and see the women, drunk with beer!"

A moral is pointed: the disgrace to a woman who gets drunk, lies on the ground, and exposes her person. As the *m'michila* makes these remarks, the figures breathe stertorously as a drunken woman would. He conducts the *wali* and all the other people past many of the other images such as *chiwi*, *nguku*, *ndomondo*, *mbale*, etc., and only stays at those he considers his own special *inyago*. The seven specially dealt with by Mlemala were as above together with *mbalapi*, the sable antelope:

881 *"Anamboloapi ukumbo, pompo pakuto!"*
533 "You noble dumit, everything (is) lovely!"
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Next comes *ukumbolo*, the ferry. There is no image but two posts represent the ferry; the *m'mishile* stands on one side of the two posts with his two assistants opposite him, one holding a bunch of leaves, the other a burning log: the first fans the log of the second, using leaves as bellows, while the *m'mishile* sings:

"Ngumbo, ngumbo, kujikututa, ngumbo!"
"The female pudenda, where it pushes itself!"

after which the *wali* one by one are pushed through between the two assistants. *Chewambo* signifies the passage from one part of the ceremony to another; here, from the *inpago* to *ching'undung'unda*. *Ku-jombola* = to cross a stream.

As they reach *ching'undung'unda* the *m'mishile* sings:

"Ching'undung'unda nalilombola jinguwo ngwo jakupachela wanjonaba!"
"Ching'undung'unda I have marked out if it were calico distinctive of chiefs!"

One of his assistants is told to go and get a pot of beer. When it is brought he sings:

"Anauli, kamumbe, nawila kunyuma!"
"You girl, little fly, wash your hands behind you!"

881 This is the sign for the woman who volunteers for the service to the leader, to come for-
533 ward, followed in turn, as each *mauli* is dealt with, by other women. The woman stands
539 back to back with her *mauli* and they hold hands, while the *m'mishile* comes and pours a
608 little beer on their hands; they make movements as of washing the hands and then separate, the woman rejoining the crowd, the boy standing to one side until all have performed the rite. This woman ever afterwards is treated by the *mauli* as his adopted sister. After this, each *nkunuai* takes his *mauli* into the bush near by and holding the boy's cloth over the lad's head, he waits there for the boy's relatives to come and redeem him with fees. It is a point of honor that as many relatives as possible shall turn out to show that the boy is much liked, this being, of course, so much the better for the *nkunuai* who gets a present from each. The *nkunuai* then uncover the boys' faces and hand over the lads to their mothers who take them away to rest in the shelters.

The *m'mishile*, meantime, has withdrawn to his hut, where all the relatives later collect; he then comes out holding his "tail," singing:

"Kwenda nkajoja ukwanonjwe koga!"
"Come and bathe those who love to bathe!"

Each adopted sister or woman guardian takes her *mauli* brother on her back and carries him off to the stream to bathe. The woman sets her *mauli* down on the bank and then leans across his back while the *m'mishile* comes along and dipping his "tail" into the

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stream, sprinkles the boy on the chest with the water. Then the positions are reversed and the woman receives the " tail " on her chest, after which they plunge into the water and bathe, each pouring water over the other. The woman rubs the boy's back and he in turn shyty rubs the back of his woman guardian. Clothes are not removed. Everyone looks on.

While this is going on, the *m'michila* and his assistants build a kind of fence across the return road; as the people start back, he sings:

"Moto	*wanga*	*akamuma*	*namapasa*	*wakumba masoka!"*
"Fire my		they are buying	I myself	they give me the spirits!"

that *'s* " everyone has got to buy from me the gifts I myself have from the spirits." As each woman comes up carrying her *mwali*, the mother runs out and makes a payment to the *m'michila* so that her son may be allowed to pass. The boys are carried back to the shelters where they rest. The mother of the leader cooks food into which the *m'michila* puts medicine; he then gives some to each *mwali* to eat, after which they partake of the food prepared by their mothers, while the *m'michila* goes to the village for the beer drinking, returning in the afternoon. In the interval the dancing men dance *chamba*, etc.

Oil standing in separate basins on the ground has previously been prepared for anointing the *wali*. The *m'michila* takes each basin and passes it across the palm of his hand on which he has smeared medicine, each basin being set down on the ground again. Taking a stick, he smears it with medicine from his " tail," and he dips it into each basin. He then comes with his "tail" to detect any woman who may have had any sexual intercourse instead of remaining continent during the stay at *Ndapala*. He dips his " tail " into each basin of oil in turn and holds it up for the oil to run off. If the oil runs off in a stream, the mother as she stands behind her basin of oil is welcomed as a good mother; if the oil runs off drop by drop, " *ndoli*," the woman is laughed to scorn. Her basin is changed for that of another woman or her oil is thrown away and some from another basin is put in its place so that no harm shall result to the boy.

The *akamuai* then take the boys into the bush near by. The *magajawisa* dress is removed, the body anointed with the oil, and fresh bark-cloth dyed black is put on. Little bows and arrows are made of small branches and grass and with these the *wali* shoot as they again enter *Lupanda*, putting the bows down on *ching'undang'unda* to the trilling of all the women present.

Immediately after this, the return is made to the village, just after sunset, the women having been busy gathering up all their belongings, while the boys were being anointed.

Some of the assistants lead the procession, the *wali* following in single file, all much subdued and walking very slowly, dressed in the new bark-cloth round the loins, with many ropes of beads round the neck and body, a headband of bark, and down the back a string of beads to which is attached a tassel. Each carries in his hand a wand about five feet long, *ngonge*, with a pattern burned in the shaft and two rattles, *masewe*, affixed at the upper end.

881 While the *wali* thus march solemnly along shaking their wands, the assistants begin singing:

"*Ku* *mlango* *aiwiwa!*"
"To the gate they have shut!"

[533] [534] to which the *wali* reply:

"*Kuswa* *kuhupila!*"
"There is no place where to pass!"

The *m'michila* remains at *Lupanda* till everyone else has left; he then sets fire to the shelters and leaving without looking back, runs to overtake the procession and then leads it on towards the village still at a slow pace, while all around is a yelling crowd of delighted mothers and other relatives and the assistants and drummers, all singing and shouting.

When the outskirts of the village are reached, the *m'michila* halts and waits for the chief to come out and give them permission to enter. The chief brings calico which unrolled on the ground measures the length of the procession of *wali*. Headed now by their leader, the *wali* walk over this calico, while the assistants roll it up behind them for the *m'michila*, as it is part of his payment. Flour may be brought him at the same time, carried by the chief's wives.

At an *Unyago* I witnessed at Kuminama's, the halt was called on the bank of a stream at the edge of the village where a bamboo arch had been erected. The arrival of Chief Malemya at this point with calico and flour was the sign for a demonstration by his young men who ran forward as if in battle, firing off blank rounds from old Tower muskets and executing a kind of war dance.

After the calico has been handed over, the chief returns to his kraal and the procession continues into the village, across the village open space to the fence round the chief's house. There, the *wali* enter by a gateway and disperse over the courtyard where they find their sleeping-mats laid out ready for them by their mothers. The *m'michila* lays his "tail" on the leader's mat to bring good luck thenceforth. With Mlemala, there is no further part for the *wali*, but in some cases they are called upon by the chief to give an exhibition of their dancing and drumming. The *wali* sleep that night in the kraal and disperse the following day.

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In the morning, the *m'michila* takes his "tail" and a stirring stick made from a millet stalk with the roots on it, and strikes the ground at points in a row in front of the chief's house. Here the pots of beer which have been prepared are placed in rows, those chosen by the chief and those chosen by the *m'michila*, and drinking commences. The *m'michila*, before he joins in, takes the *wali* to an ash-heap in the village and there sprinkles them with medicine from a grain-mortar after which they go with their *akuwasi* behind a house and change into new cloths. They then go and salute the chief by clapping their hands and depart to their villages, duly initiated and somewhat subdued by what they have been through. Their new names as "men" may be given them by the *akuwasi* either at *Lupanda* or after the return to the village.

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or after the return to the village. The boys often wear all their beadwork and new cloth for several days; after carrying their *ngongo* for a similar period, they give them up to their *akamasi*. Together they go into the bush where they break up their wands and put them either into a pit or in the forked branch of a tree. Before the *m'michila* leaves, he brings to the chief all his takings and these are divided between them.

Mention has been made above of the *ingango* and it now remains to consider these more fully. The figures vary in subject, in number and in arrangement. At the ceremony at Kuminama's, the following were arranged in a long line beginning with the whale and ending with the python before *ching'undang'ungo* (Pl. X, fig. 2).

1. *Nalumgwasi* ..... the whale (Pl. XI, fig. 7).
2. *Ngwena* ..... the crocodile (Pl. XII, fig. 1).
3. *Chisi* ..... the leopard (Pl. XII, fig. 3).
4. *Mbunda* ..... the zebra (Pl. X, fig. 6).
5. *Ngaka* ..... the scaly anteater (Pl. XII, fig. 2).
6. *Ndemanda* ..... the hippopotamus (Pl. XII, fig. 4).
7. *Kanga* (*nakanga f*) ..... (Pl. X, fig. 5).
8. *Mbalapi* ..... the sable antelope (Pl. XI, fig. 8).
9. *Wakangwa wa akituwa-bulala* ..... the woman dead in child-birth (Pl. XIII, fig. 2).
10. *Lguwa* ..... the sun (Pl. XI, fig. 4).
11. *Lchalata* ..... the scorpion (Pl. XII, fig. 6).
12. *Mbale* ..... the plate (Pl. XI, fig. 6).
13. *Lchamamba* ..... a kind of cloth (Pl. XI, fig. 5).
14. *Njasi* ..... the lightning-lizard (Pl. XIII, fig. 4).
15. *Salata* ..... the iguana (Pl. XII, fig. 5).
16. *Munda* ..... the man (Pl. XIII, fig. 1).
17. *Lipulwa* ..... the wild pig (Pl. XI, fig. 1).
18. *Sungula* ..... the hare (Pl. XI, fig. 2).
19. *Sato* ..... the python (Pl. XIII, fig. 3).

Beside these, *Nyasa*, the lake, nearly always appears;[1] *Mwesi*, the moon, the drunken women, and certain animals may be represented, and in addition, *chisia*, "the dwelling place of all the old spirits." Each particular *m'michila* has his favorite figures about which he sings, always commencing, however, with the whale.

Reproduced here is the series of *ingango* at Kuminama's village sketched at the time of my visit. It seems probable that originally the same set of figures was always reproduced. It is hard to trace their significance with any certainty. Natives aver that they are made only for instructional purposes. "The animals are made so that the boys may recognise them, while some of the other figures have reference to customs." They deny the more in-

[1] Cf. Stannus and Dapsy, 'The initiation ceremony for boys among the Yao of Nyasaland,' op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2.

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778 gives an excellent idea of the average figure; it is circular in plan, often with a little hillock in the centre known as *kutumbi kunguguli*, "the hill of debt," and disposed in the quadrants are four depressions.

881 778 When the *usili* are introduced to *Chinguas*, they stand round in a circle while the *n'michila* stands in one of the depressions with perhaps two of his assistants in others. The *n'michila* sings:

533 539 "*Nyasa kunyungula chinyagwila nasungula ningumila kwilumba, amai!*
"The lake encircles was I born child I would have died on the plain, mother!"
Ninguvila ningumila!"

or

"I have lived by the great lake all my life; I should have died in the plains."

while all three make movements as of paddling a canoe. The depressions are said to represent canoes. I believe this is the recognised form but I have also seen an oblong figure with two outlines of unmistakable canoes. *Chinguas* is usually found near *nakungwesi*.

Chiuta, when represented, stands beyond *mbanda*. It consists of two trenches at right angles forming a cross, which are covered over with logs and earth and the whole outlined with flour in a decorative pattern. The end of one limb of the cross is left open and round this opening a screen of grass is made. As the *usili* approach *Chiuta*, some of the assistants or *akawasi* descend into the trenches for the ceremony. The *n'michila* takes up his stand at the centre of the cross and sings:

"*Chiuta, amai, kwalola chiuta!*"
"*Chiuta, mother, come see chiuta!*"

881 778 [775] Then as everyone says "Listen, listen!" crying is heard "coming out of the bowels of the earth," followed by drumming and the singing of the *chindimba* songs (sometimes *mbanda* or *masiku*); a horn is sometimes heard as well as *kululuta*, trilling with the tongue against the lips. *Chiuta* is called "the resting place of all departed spirits" and the sounds are said to be the echoes of their doings. The word is not met with elsewhere among the Yao, although it occurs in the Chinyanja and in other languages of this country with the meaning "the heavens."

Chiwuta is said by Hetherwick[1] to be "a large fish that forms one of the pictures at the *Unguga*," but I have never seen it or heard of it, and I am doubtful of the correctness of the statement.

778 [531] *Chiny'wulung'wanda:* Dr. Davey's photograph[2] is an excellent reproduction of this figure, which consists of a mound of earth flattened on the top, and decorated with geometric patterns in flour which extend to the ground. In the centre and at the four corners, so to speak, are implanted billets of wood with decorative lines and dots in black and red on the white wood (Pl. X, figs. 1, 2). The billets are three inches in diameter and project twelve to fifteen inches above the ground.

[1] Handbook of the Yao language, op. cit., p. 141. [2] Op. cit., Pl. III, fig. 2.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT? Yao FT?

The actual meaning of this figure it is very difficult to ascertain. It may be referred to as "the little hill of debt" signifying, I believe, an idea that everyone owes a debt to his *Unyago*, to his progenitors, and to his own future progeny. It is the spot where medicine has been buried to insure the *Unyago* success, and may be looked upon as the keystone of the ceremonies which take place at *Lupanda*. The derivation of the word is probably from *ku-unga*, "to heap up earth into a mound," or maybe from *ku-unda*, "to teach children manners," but it is uncertain as the word is variously spelled; the spelling I have given follows the pronunciation of the old people. 778

Lupanda: This consists of a mound of earth closely resembling *ching'undang'unda* in shape and decoration with similar wooden billets at the base, while on the top is often planted a branch from a tree (Pl. X, figs. 3, 4). The word is derived from the verb *ku-panda*, "to plant" and signifies the place which the *m'michilo* marks for the ceremonies to take place.

Reference has already been made to the assistants of the *m'michilo*. The chief assistant has been already mentioned; some three or four others who aid him are friends of the *m'michilo* from his own village. They participate at the essential moments of the ceremonies, singing, drumming, or dancing, and together with some of the *akamusi*, take part in *chinta*. Beside these, there are regular bands of trained drummers and dancers who attend *Lupanda* and dance in the village in the morning and at *Lupanda* in the afternoon of the day of return. They usually dance *chewba* and *sunje*. They are men who come for the fun of the thing and, of course, may gain a good deal from presents. On so important an occasion, there is much criticism of their performance. Should one of them not dance well enough to please the old people, they may call out, "Pluck off his feathers!" and the unlucky fellow has all his dancing kit and any clothes beside stripped off and he is driven forth naked, the laughing stock of the crowd. 881

Chiputa: The initiation ceremony for girls is on lines very similar to the boys' ceremony. The age at which the girls take part is from about ten to fourteen years, though lately they have been much younger on the whole, in consequence of the elder people's wishes that their children shall benefit from its instruction before they come under civilising influences and the recently introduced mission teaching.

When a number of girls have reached the proper age in a village or group of villages, as with the boys, the chief is approached and he arranges a date for the ceremony during the same season as *Lupanda* and for similar reasons.

The woman corresponding to the *m'michilo* who arranges everything is called *mawusi*. Each girl *mwali* about to be initiated is looked after by a woman, her *nkawusi*.

The girls, their guardians, and the mistress of the ceremonies, together with the inhabitants of the villages adjourn, as in the case of *Lupanda*, to a spot some little distance from the main village, called *Chiputa*. Here grass shelters have been erected beforehand and food has been collected.

[88] The evening of the first day is called *lyuwa lya makwanwi*, or "the day of singing," as singing is kept up far into the night, but the exact significance of the word *likwanwi* I have been unable to find out.

[515] The second day is spoken of as *lyuwa lya mazuwa*, "the day of washing of hands," (*kuzuwa*, "to wash the hands") when the *wali* are specially instructed as to the necessities of washing hands before preparing food, etc.; precept is followed by practice. The night is spent quietly; for this day's proceedings few people probably will have remained.

On the third day, however, they come back again from their villages in crowds to witness the performance of *usemi*, *lyuwa lya usemi*, "the day of house moving" (*kusemi*, "to change one's abode, carrying goods and chattels with one"). A representation is given of an onslaught on a village by enemies and all pretend to run away carrying their worldly goods with them. The part of the attackers is played by a number of women who, armed with guns and having donned belts and powder horns, rush in on the crowd from the bush and make prisoners of all they can catch. The men are put in miniature slave-sticks; women who are seen trying to run off with a child on the back, one round the neck and one on each hip, are driven as prisoners into a group. When all the noise and fun are over, the prisoners are released. This is often followed by a mock trial. Two women dressed up to impersonate chiefs of rival tribes, argue an old, imaginary quarrel, usually pretending that there has been a raid by one party on an ivory caravan going to the coast, with stealing of the ivory, while the other party in revenge has caught and killed some of the people belonging to the first mentioned. The thing may be kept up for an hour with much talking and great zest, all those taking part being women. Finally each party agrees to give compensation for the damage done; each presents the other with bundles of sugar cane, and friendship is reëstablished. That night, everyone again rests quietly.

The fourth day is known as *lyuwa lya kusyunga* (*kusyunga*, "to go round about," referring to the dancing which goes on). Dancing takes place during the day and also the ceremony of *Lukusi* to be referred to later. One of the favorite songs sung this day runs as follows:

[533 539] *"Ndembe'ji nkamba'gwipo anindo mwene nkongwe'ya, amasi ambosanga ugunjanenu!"*
"(Tusk this) a present don't give me free wait for me little girl, dear me! and we'll have some fun together!"

On the fifth day, return is made to the villages. The girl *wali* attended constantly by their *akamusi* then live together for the period of instruction in huts in a special enclosure in the chief's village or in similar enclosures in a number of villages. The *wali* may go out into the village but must go about with bowed head and look no man in the face; they wear bark-cloth called *liwiko* and should they meet anyone, they must pull over their faces the kind of hood with which their garments are provided. They may not share food with outsiders. If they did so, the latter would sicken with a disease called *chiumbelu*.

[753]

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT? Yao FT?

The *uali* thus remain for about a month under the care of their guardians, during which time they receive most valuable instruction as to their behavior to others, especially to their elders and to members of the opposite sex. Their faults are brought home to them and many little pieces of advice given. They are taught the household duties which will be their lot thenceforth and they are forewarned of approaching puberty and what it means to them. [88]

During this period their child-names are not used and until their new names are assigned to them, they are called after birds and animals, generally some of the smaller animals, e.g. Anyingalwe (*nyingalwe* = the shrew rat), Alitawala (*litawala* = a big species of rat), Analyelye (*nyalyelye* = the shrew). I have been unable to ascertain whether these have any totemistic significance. [551]

The girls are usually given a fright to impress on them the danger of lions; one night an imitation of a lion approaching their enclosure is made when all is dark; then all of a sudden one of the *akawusi* armed with big thorns instead of claws will spring upon one of the girls, generally picking out the worst behaved.

When the term of instruction is completed, they again adjourn to *Chiputu* for two days where *Unyago* is danced on the first night by women, on the second night by men. The first day is spent by a party of men and women in the bush, preparing figures of animals and their dress for the dance. The women wear a small garment of bark-cloth called *matakopaiula*, a word which literally means "buttocks of a frog" but which is used with the meaning of trousers and refers in this case to the fact that the bark-cloth is sewn round the upper part of each thigh into a garment like a pair of knickerbockers. Round the abdomen and chest are worn bands made of short pieces of small, decorticated millet stalks; similar bands are worn on the legs and arms, two on each thigh, two on the leg, one at the wrist, below the elbow, and one round the upper arm. In the dark these give the body the appearance of being painted in alternate bands of black and white. They also wear a head-dress of the same material. [292] [301]

On the first evening of the return to *Chiputu*, this party of women appears after dark; they dance in a row, advancing and retiring in step, swinging their arms and moving their bodies to exclamations of *Bi-dil Bi-dil* Other women dress up as men, wearing long beards made of *likanga*, a kind of fibre plant.

The second night, the representations of animals made of grass and bamboo framework supported by men appear, the elephant, the rhinoceros, and various antelopes being the common figures, also the zebra made of painted bark cloth. These animal figures are similar to the *nisyau* or *nisyao* of the Anyanja and to those of the Awisa,[1] but the *sunkima* is unknown among the Yao. [171]

During all these presentations at *Chiputu*, the *uali* seated on mats are the chief spectators and are duly frightened by the performances of the last two days.

[1] Stannus, 'Notes on some tribes of British Central Africa,' op. cit., p. 298.

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

881 The following morning at dawn, each guardian washes her ward, anoints her from head to foot with oil and puts on her body new calico, ropes of beads being worn round the neck, and on the head a little bark-cloth cap fringed with beads called *chiwala*. At a given signal, each guardian picks up her ward on her shoulders and pretends to run away with her to her own village. This is the signal for the fathers of the girls to run up and redeem their children by making presents to the guardians. Each *mwali* is given her new name by her guardian, often the guardian's own or that of the girl's grandmother. The girls are then set down again, a procession is formed and all return to the village, with great rejoicing, as in the case of the boys. The girls then disperse and go back to live with their mothers or grandmothers. The *wali* may be made to give an exhibition of their dancing; they dance *chiwala*.

On the occasion of the first visit to *Chiputu*, as a kind of accessory, there is a ceremony for young married men which forms, as mentioned elsewhere, the second part of their initiation ceremonies or *Unyago*.

It is known as *Kulukwi* and is a kind of test of manhood. It was formerly considered as important as *Lupanda*, but now, I think, the last *Kulukwi* has been performed; for the young men of the present day, largely emancipated from chief-rule and freed from the ties of tribal custom, care less and less for their old method of up-bringing.

881 842 When *Chiputu* is about to take place, any young newly married men whose wives have not become pregnant are pressed to go to their second ceremony. The wife may ask some woman friend to act as his guardian or some woman may volunteer for the service. Often the young fellow will make pretence of not wanting to go; he may be chased and caught, and with his hands tied behind his back, wearing bark-cloth, he is conducted to the ceremony by other men.

Each young man is attended by a woman guardian and during the first visit to *Chiputu*, they sleep in two rows of grass sheds facing each other, the women in one line, the young men in the other line, each facing his woman guardian, with fires in the free-way between the two rows of huts. Or they may sleep in one big grass shed, each woman-guardian next to the young man she attends, and so in pairs all down both sides of the grass shed, the fires being made in the middle. The young men have to pay for a share in the food and beer made for *Chiputu*, but each guardian cooks for her man.

On the afternoon of *lyuwa lya kunyanga*, the young men are taken off to a place in the bush perhaps a quarter to one mile away from *Chiputu*, *ku-kukwi* " to *kukwi* " as is said.

Here they are formed into a semi-circle of from half a dozen to ten or twenty of them, each with his guardian and a crowd of the grown-up population from the village in attendance. Good advice is given them as to their behavior, especially in regard to their wives and mothers-in-law. Anyone who has any particularly bad trait is sure to hear of it now, the mother or father of the young man having arranged that it shall be brought up. The

3:Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

woman guardian shows to her man red and white beads in her hand and tells him that white indicates health while red means sickness, thereby pointing out to him their deep-rooted beliefs in the diseases associated with intercourse or association with women during menstruation. 881 842

Then follows a test of manhood. The women guardians put little pieces of stick (*lukwi* – sticks or firewood) on their heads and sing: [533 539]

"*Ngampe nakumpa lukwi lwa mnuku'chamuno liu!*"
"I must give my wife (when sick) firewood of the *mnuku* although it gives lots of ashes!"

What is meant is that when his wife is ill, the husband should fetch the firewood even though he does not know which woods give least ash; the *mnuku* tree gives many ashes. The little piece of wood a few inches long with a notch in the middle is then handed to the young man by his guardian. He places it on the ground in front of him, kneels down, and with a small axe he attempts to divide the stick at the notch. If he is successful, he is greeted with cheers, clapping, and much rejoicing. By proving his power to hit straight, he has also established his manhood; it is prophesied that he will soon have children. Should he miss through nervousness, shouts of derision welcome him and his guardian shows her disgust with his performance. If he is a young fellow well-liked in his village, he may be allowed to make a second attempt. After this ceremony, each couple bathes each other in their shelters by pouring water over the head and body without removing the clothes, thus making brotherhood. Forever after the man must treat this woman with great respect, must not address her for some time, and then only after making her a small present.

The woman guardian picks up the two pieces of the broken *lukwi* and on the morning before they all leave *Chiputu*, the mother or sister of the young man gives her a string of red or white beads saying, "These are to bind up the bundle of wood." The man's guardian binds up the pieces of wood with the beads and gives it to her man. When they have returned to the village, they go to the young man's wife and he presents them to her. The guardian, however, steps in and slips off the beads which she keeps, while the wife, pleased at her husband's success, drops the two pieces of wood into the fire.

During the weeks that the girl *wali* remain under instruction in the village, those young men who have been *in-lukwi* sleep in one big enclosure away from their wives and do not cohabit until after the second return from *Chiputu* is made.

Another *in-lukwi* test sometimes, I believe, introduced into Yao ceremonies but really one practised by the Mpotola people and not proper to the Yao, is as follows: [177]

The guardian lies on the ground, wearing a small loin-cloth, and holding beads in her clenched hands, red in one, white in the other. Her man standing at her feet, bends over her and projects saliva on to her abdomen through a rolled up leaf held between his lips, at the same time choosing one of her hands. If he chooses the hand containing the white beads, he is hailed with delight as a man indeed, but should he choose the hand containing

3: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1912) 1922 FT7 Yao FT7

841 842 the red beads, he is jeered at and laughed to scorn. In this case, the white beads are held to indicate semen, the red beads menstrual blood.

843 *Lítiwo:* This ceremony is enacted at the time when a young married woman quickens with her first child. *Lítiwo* (*lu-tiwa*, to plait) refers to the plaited cord put round the woman's neck. The woman and her husband both are present, and in addition, only women, possibly with their babies.

For the man, *Lítiwo* is looked upon as the third or completing ceremony of his *Unyago*. He must have been to *Lupanda* and *Chiputu*, otherwise he cannot be admitted to *Lítiwo*. If, however, the husband is not eligible, some other man who has completed his *Unyago*, is married, and has children, may act as proxy to a woman at *Lítiwo*.

In every district there is generally some woman who arranges and conducts the ceremony. She is called *nakwaga;* naturally, no European has been present at *Lítiwo* but my information was gained from Kuliati, a woman who for years acted as *nakwaga* in the villages round Malenya's kraal, and Chilandana, her old mother who had acted in the same capacity before her and who had come from the old Machinga country where her mother in turn had been a well-known *nakwaga*. [115]

When a woman quickens with child for the first time, her women-folk visit the local *nakwaga*, saying, "We are going to shave so and so (naming the woman) and to get bananas. Tomorrow, we start pounding flour. In three days we shall be ready, and you will come over to arrange things." At the appointed time, the *nakwaga* having partaken of food early because she will not eat for the rest of the day, goes out of the village to some spot a half-mile away in the bush and there sees that all preparations are made and sufficient food collected. The food is supplied by the mothers of the man and woman, and consists essentially of beans (*njawa* and *nguandi*), porridge, sugar-cane, and bananas, but no beer.

All being ready, a procession in single file leaves the village for the appointed place, the woman's sponsor leading, the woman followed by the husband and his sponsor (a woman), and the married women assembled from nearby villages. The sponsor is known as *nkawusi* or *alombwe*. Neither *nkawusi* nor *nakwaga* may have sexual relations with their husbands till after the birth of the child. The woman wears bark-cloth stained black, but may wear blue cloth on returning to the village, while her husband is decked out in his finest cloths and ornaments. They have partaken of food early in the day as they fast until the next day.

Arrived at the place, the man and woman take up their positions on mats separated from each other by some twenty or thirty paces, each with his *nkawusi*. The man's *nkawusi* sits on the same mat with him and never leaves him throughout the ceremony. The woman preserves a dignified quiet but the man is expected to make the most of himself sitting with hands on hips, and displaying his fine clothes worn after the fashion of a chief.

While all the assembled crowd of women sit round in a semi-circle, the *nakwaga* commences the proceedings, singing a number of songs to the woman and the man in turn,

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909)1910 FT7 Yao FT7 Maravi FR4

CIRCUMCISION AND INITIATION CEREMONIES.

Y 304 M [304] Circumcision was not practised among Anyanja. Among Amangoche, Machinga and Yao, the practice was known as *Inyago wa lupanda*.

Ku-umbala lupanda:—the prepuce was drawn forward and a nick made on the right side of the median line near the frenum. An application mixed with oil was applied. At the present time the Mohammedan practice is common *Ku-umbala jando*:—the prepuce is drawn forward through a split piece of bamboo and cut off with a sharp knife.

Circumcision is performed on boys usually at the age of nine to twelve years by a medicine man called *Ngaliba*, an honourable calling, in a hut at the Inyago camp. Both patient and operator stand, unless the former is young, when he sits. The ceremony is witnessed only by the boy's friend. Among Mohammedans clitoridectomy used to be performed by a woman operator (*nakanga*), but, it is said, was discontinued, on account of the heavy mortality, about seven years ago. At the time of the operation a woman was given medicine to make her vomit all unlawful things she might have eaten.

Y 304 ● 981 Initiation ceremonies (including circumcision) take place at irregular intervals. The chief or headman settles the date at which the Inyago shall be held, generally once a year in July, when there is no work and little else to do. Boys who are considered ready will then take part. The elder brother or a friend of a boy settles whether he is ready for circumcision. The mother then takes a present to the chief. The boys, their friends and the medicine man then depart for the bush, sometimes a couple of miles away from the village. The number may vary from three or four to as many as thirty or forty. In the bush grass huts (= *masasi*) are erected for their shelter. Food is brought by the mothers and deposited a little way from the camp, and the friends who have accompanied the boys fetch and carry and act as sentinels to prevent approach of any "outsiders." Six months used to be spent in the bush, now four to eight weeks only, and all the circumcision wounds must be healed by the time of the candidates' return. If a boy die, the mother is not informed, she is allowed to bring food each day; at the end when the return is made rejoicing she is told by one of the men.

Y [967] The exit from the village is accompanied by the friends dancing *Tsanji* or *Masewe*, the boys in old calico (formerly always in bark cloth) walk and sit down on arrival at the place appointed. The circumcision is performed the following day; during the time which follows instruction is given them on their duties in after life as men, in good behaviour in their married life, *re* coitus, eating of food, superstitions regarding salt, etc. When this is all over a message is sent to the village, and the youths, walking quietly dressed in new cloths, are met half-way by the women and girls, who dance and sing; after the return to the village there is drinking and dancing, the newly initiated refraining for one day. At the present time the youth probably has some "friend" of the opposite sex with whom he sleeps; until he has had coitus he may not eat food into which salt has been put. His

Y 551 981 [836]

4: Stannus D-5 (ca. 1909) 1910 FT7 Yao FT7
Bemba FQ5

mother is very careful about this in preparing his food lest he die in consequence. V 55 | 88
He henceforth bears his man's name, and it is an insult to use his child's name again.

Initiation of girls takes place in much the same way, instruction being given by the old women. After initiation most girls wear a string of big blue beads round the neck. In some cases, where it is not convenient to go far into the bush, a patch of bush near the village may be selected, the approaches are carefully guarded, and pieces of calico on bamboos are used as flags to mark the place. Y 98

Namwali ceremony witnessed at Kasanka's village (Awisa tribe) August 30th, 1907:—A girl about fourteen years of age, well developed. Among the Awisa the initiation ceremony takes place when the girl has reached puberty and is ready to be married. Four days are spent by the candidate in a small grass hut built in the middle of the *bwalo* (= village open space), when instruction is given her in all her future duties by a woman who is her "friend," in this case a woman of about twenty-six years of age. B 98

About mid-day of the fourth day she was brought into the *bwalo* wearing old calico round the waist, and with two friends, one on either side, danced a kind of shuffling step backwards and forwards to the time of four drums; it was witnessed by the women of the village, who occasionally joined in the dance. After this she retired, and later in the afternoon reappeared with blue calico from waist as far as knees, white calico tied round waist as a sash, a rope of blue beads round neck and under arms. On the head she wore an erection made of flour and water with a B [535] B [302]

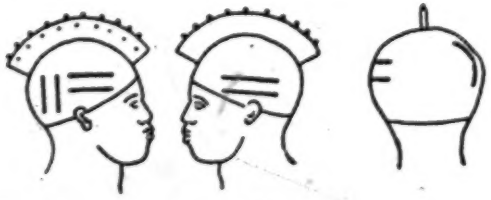

FIG. 1.

central crest into which were stuck little pieces of reed, lines of red were painted on the white ground as shown in sketch. Always supported by her "friend" or "sponsor," she again danced for a few minutes and then departed.

This night about twelve midnight *Zingwa* was to be danced; all the evening and up till midnight a boy went round and round the village calling in a shrill voice warning none to approach. It was a very dark moonless night, and to the beating of seven drums (four small, two medium sized, one big) the *Zingwa* came into the *bwalo*. One was an elephant 8 feet high with a man in each pair of legs—made of grass, trunk and tusks complete; the other, called an *Nswala* (a small antelope), resembled a dwarf jack-in-the-green more than anything else. The elephant pranced, the *Nswala* spun round and round; each was attended by a man with a B [534] B [778]

5: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1948) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

'In 1946 village A had about 30 huts in it. A certain man B was the son of the previous headman called A_1 and hence mother's brother's son or cross-cousin of the present headman called A_2. B had two wives living patrilocally and while B was serving in the Army he had a letter from one of his sisters (i.e. his mother's brother's daughter or cross-cousin to the headman) to say that A_2 was sleeping with B's wives. When B returned he started making inquiries from his wives and he eventually secured a confession from them. B then went to a man called C, who stood in the relationship of mother's brother to the original A_1 and complained about the behaviour of the village headman. C also instituted inquiries and ascertained that it was true. C then approached a local headman of some standing (whom I shall call D) and asked him to arbitrate in the case. D pronounced A_2 guilty and awarded compensation of £6. 10s. to B. B, however, refused to take the money, and said that he wished to leave the village. D observed that he had every right to do this and that A_2 had no right to complain 'since he had broken the village himself'. B took his sorority-group, who occupied about twenty of the thirty huts, to a place about thirty miles away and set up a village of his own. The sorority-group of the village headman A_2 remained behind in the old village.'

This case illustrates the points that I have made. It shows how the two groups in this village stand opposed to each other in that B's sister wrote to tell him of A_2's conduct. Also when the village did break up it did so along certain very clear lines of genealogical relationship. Second, it illustrates the operation of the desire for dependants in that B refused what by Yao standards is a very large sum of money for compensation and preferred to move off and establish a village of his own. This attitude is also shown by the arbitrator who takes the point of view that regrettable as it is, the village must in the circumstances split, and while he appreciates the headman's feelings he makes it clear that the headman has no one to blame but himself. Third, it is interesting to note that this split took place after the death of the old village headman when the personal ties with both opposed groups were severed. Though the new village headman A_2 assumes the kinship terms of his predecessor and also calls the children of A_1 'children' yet in fact he is their cross-cousin while the old village headman was their father.

The position of the village headman in Yao social structure may be summarized thus: the village headman is the leader of a group which may be a simple kin-group or a composite group of two or more opposed matrilineages linked to each other through himself or one of his predecessors whom he represents to them. The numerical size of the village determines the status of the headman, but the size that it can reach is limited by an immanent instability in the kinship structure which is expressed, in terms of their status system, first, in the competition of brothers for the wardenship of the sorority-group, and second, in the competition between the headman and the wardens of the patrilineally linked sorority-groups, who wish to set up villages of their own.

The Yao see villages as units and this is clearly shown at the initiation ceremonies of boys, when the initiates are kept in grass-sheds, each partition of which refers to a particular village. In the same way a person is identified as belonging to a particular village known by the name of the village headman. Thus a man might say: 'I come from Kumpumbe's village.'

5: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1948) 1949 FT7 Yao FT7

Village headmen themselves are graded in importance and there are certain marks of rank which distinguish the more important headmen. We have already examined one of the most obvious ways in which the village headman's importance is judged, that is, by the number of people in his village. In addition there are other ways in which village headmen may be distinguished both from the common people and from less important headmen. Thus, for example, some of the more important village headmen have the right to conduct initiation ceremonies, this right being granted to them by the man who is in a way the most important village headman of all—the Chief. The right to hold a boys' initiation ceremony (*lupanda*) is of more importance than the right to hold a girls' initiation ceremony (*ciputu*). Yet another mark of rank is the right to wear a plain crimson band around the forehead (*mlangali*), this right also being granted by the Chief.

The Administration has recognized the more important village headmen and has entrusted to them certain duties. By no means all the people called 'village headmen' in this paper are recognized as such by the Administration, but I do not know of any person who has the right to wear a red band and is not also an Administrative village headman.

The status system has apparently been taken over from pre-European days, but it is uncertain to what extent these important village headmen had powers. Some to-day have all the marks of rank that the Chief has, i.e., they hold both boys' and girls' initiation ceremonies, are entitled to the special greeting accorded to important village headmen (*subahe*), wear a red band, have the right to be buried in the village and not in the common cemeteries, and to have their bodies prepared for interment by people of similar rank. It appears that such people exercised a certain amount of power, by reason of their personal qualities, over less powerful neighbours, and some were able in the past to demonstrate their autonomy by moving off to establish petty chiefdoms of their own.

Nowadays the Administrative village headmen have certain statutory duties to perform towards other minor groups actually independent but considered, for the purposes of the Administration, to belong to the village. The relative importance of the headman is still the deciding factor in such questions as determining who is to be called in to arbitrate in a case. Thus, though for Administrative purposes a small village may be considered to be a part of a larger Administrative village under an Administrative village headman, yet when a case for arbitration occurs within that smaller village, some other person than the Administrative village headman may be called in as arbitrator.

Laws promulgated by the Administration are conveyed through the Chief to the Administrative village headman and in this way a hierarchy of power is being introduced. The small village headman now sees the Administrative village headman as a representative of the Chief and the Administration. The Administrative village headman in turn sees the Chief in this light. But in matters directly affecting the Administration, the small village headman also sees the Administrative village headman as his own representative *vis-à-vis* the Chief and the Administration.

In general the village is by far the most important corporate body in the social organization of the Yao, not only as a significant primary group but also as an element